

Sabbath School Lesson #6 – Victory in the Wilderness – 30 Jan - 5 Feb 2016

Christ came to earth and took upon Himself fallen human nature, and in the wilderness overcame all the temptations, and thus gives His victorious life to all that live by faith in Him. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). But only the true Son of God, not the role-playing son, had victory in the wilderness.

In Genesis 3:6 we see fallen mankind doomed with absolutely no hope. “Sorrow filled heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and that world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die” {EW 149.2}. But the true literal Son of God, not a trinity role-playing son, full of the love of His Father that He inherited, had compassion for the doomed human race: “I saw the lovely Jesus and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon His countenance. Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father” {EW 149.2}. After pleading with His Father, Jesus “made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that He had been pleading with His Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom, to take the sentence of death upon Himself, that through Him man might find pardon” {EW 149.2}. Talking to angels, “Jesus told them that He would stand between the wrath of His Father and guilty man, that He would bear iniquity and scorn, and but few would receive Him as the Son of God” {EW 149.3}. Many Jews did not receive Him as the Son of God, denied His Sonship, and sought to kill Him for He had said, “that God was His Father” (John 5:18).

Today, in the trinity gods of our Seventh-day Adventist theologians, whom Christ showed Ezekiel in vision as “ancient men,” the terms ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ are envisaged “in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery,” as role-plays. “Accepting the roles that the plan entitled, ... there was in a sense, a submission on the part of the Son to the Father” (Gordon Jenson, AR 31 Oct 1996); “The sonship of Jesus, however, is not ontological, but functional” (Gerhard Pfandl, BRI 1999); in this role-playing, it makes no difference if “the being we have come to know as God the Father came to die for us, and the one we have come to know as Jesus stayed back in heaven” (Roy Adams, Sabbath School Lesson, 10 April 2008). These ancient men ally with Satan to “obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God” {TDG 128.1}; these ancient men “preacheth another Jesus” and by this ‘Jesus’ many Seventh-day Adventists “receive another spirit” and “another gospel” (2 Corinthians 11:4). It is with great sadness thus the true Jesus says to us, “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” (John 5:43-44). Mark this: No Seventh-day Adventist can receive Jesus’ victory in the wilderness while believing Him to be a trinity son, denying His Sonship, and accepting “another Jesus.”

In the great controversy, only the true Son of God can have victory over Satan; the trinity ‘son of god’ is “another Jesus” who never had victory in the wilderness and cannot give us victory – *Nemo dat quod non habet* (“no one gives what he does not have”). In the true Son of God we are sons of God and have victory. “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). Faith is “the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). By faith we know that which is true in the things that pertain to our salvation, but which we cannot perceive by our natural senses. No one can overcome the world save he that is born of God. No one can know that he is born of God except by faith. Without faith we should be without power to withstand the forces of evil.

Faith is the point at which Satan makes his attack. God has said, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 John 5:1). This is true, because God has spoken it; and upon His word, faith rests. And it is just here that the devil makes his attack. Upon this point he thought to overcome the Saviour of the world. When Jesus had been in the wilderness and had fasted forty days, the tempter came and said to Him, “If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread” (Matthew 4:3). Satan was in effect saying to the man Jesus, ‘You are not the Son of God; if you are, do something to prove it.’

What evidence did the Saviour have that He is not role-playing, that He was truly the Son of God? He had come to earth and born a babe in Bethlehem, and we are told that He grew

up and developed in mind and physical stature like any other baby that has come into the world. He had been made in all things like unto His brethren in mortal flesh (Hebrews 2:17).

There was no outward evidence, nothing that the natural senses could grasp, that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. It was written, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2); and when Peter said to Him, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus answered, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:16-17).

The Jews looked for a deliverer who would show in his outward appearance that he was of Divine origin, and they did not find him. And when Jesus was alone in the wilderness, at the end of His long fast, weak and emaciated, there was certainly nothing about Him to afford any outward evidence whatever of His Divinity. Under such circumstances it was that the tempter said to Him, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread;" and the temptation to Jesus to doubt, and to do something to prove to Himself that He was indeed the Son of God, must have been very strong. If Jesus had done as Satan suggested, He would have manifested a lack of faith. He stood just where we must then, – upon the evidence of faith. God had said, "This is My beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17), to have done something to prove to Himself that this was true, would have been doubting God.

As Satan came to Jesus, so he comes to us. God has said, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1). But Satan says, 'You are not born of God; all the appearance is against it. Look at the sins that you have committed! If you are born of God, what is your evidence?' And just as Jesus in the wilderness resisted Satan, so must we do; not by essaying to prove by doing something or to produce some tangible proof that we are born of God, but by resting upon the evidence of faith, which grasps the word of God.

Lest you reason that humans, being sons of God, is not ontological, and then think Jesus' Sonship is also not ontological as the trinitarians preach, be not deceived! "for 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son,' – not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father's person" {ST May 30, 1895 Par. 3}. Faith brings further evidence of our Divine relationship. Note, when Jesus said to Satan, after the latter had sought to induce Jesus to worship him, "Get thee hence" (Matthew 4:10), Satan had no power to withstand His word; and he left Him, and angels came and ministered unto Him. His faith gained the victory; and so will it be with us, "from faith to faith" (Romans 1:17) in Him we are victorious sons of God.

"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world," and when we get the victory over the world by faith, it is an evidence of our sonship which Satan cannot question. "Resist the devil" – resist the devil "steadfast in the faith" – "and he will flee from you." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ" – that is, "confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" – yea, Christ has come into your flesh, He lives in your heart – "is born of God," and "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (Quoted from: 1 John 5:1-5; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9; 1 John 4:2).

There is one most precious statement in Christ's victory in the wilderness: "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season" (Luke 4:13). Christ was tempted for our sakes. "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). He can succour us in our temptation by putting His mind in us, as the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:5 exhorts us to let Him do. Peter 4:1-2: "Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." Whoever therefore is armed with the mind with which Christ resisted temptation, suffers with Him; and he conquers with Him also. Satan will tempt us fiercely, but we have the comforting thought that when we resist with the mind of Christ, he will leave us for a season. He will in time return to the attack, hoping to find us off our guard; but for a time we may be left entirely alone with the Lord, to gather fresh strength for another struggle. The devil will flee from us, when we resist him steadfastly in the faith; Christ would never leave us nor forsake us; and by the true Jesus in us, not a role-playing "another Jesus," we have victory in the wilderness.