

Sabbath School Lesson #14 – Some Lessons From Job – 24-30 December 2016

Christ would have us learn some lessons from the experience of Job. James wrote: “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:11). We have covered the “patience of Job” in the earlier Lesson comments. We will focus on two lessons: the hope of resurrection, and the hope of seeing the Redeemer.

Job said, “If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change comes. Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee; Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands” (Job 14:14-15). “If I wait, the grave is mine house; I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father” (Job 17:13-14). Waiting in the grave, in corruption, till the Lord calls and the change comes, is echoed by Paul: “Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). While Job believed in the resurrection, scholars of Athens mocked Paul’s hope of resurrection. “When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked” (Acts 17:32). Scholars of Athens heard Paul up to that point, but that was too much. Had the apostle spoken of life in the spirit world after death they would have listened; for the pagan notion of life after death was just that.

But it was not the pagan philosophy that Paul preached. He preached “Jesus and the resurrection” (Acts 17:18). He knew that life and immortality are brought to light only in the Gospel (2 Timothy 1:10), and immortality is conferred when “the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

It is for that glad time that the saints of God which “sleep in the dust of the earth” are waiting. Job declared, “If a man die shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.” Will it seem a long time to wait? Not an instant; for there can be no sense of time to one who sleeps in death. To Adam or Abel the time of waiting till the voice of the Lord at His coming awakens them can be no longer than to the last saint who falls asleep in Jesus. And it is a glorious thought that not one of all those who have served the Lord, however lowly the sphere of service, will be forgotten in that day. Then it is that Paul will receive the “crown of life” (2 Timothy 4:12), and all the saints of God, from Adam down, will “together” be raised to meet the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18). And there is comfort in these words. But there is no place for a resurrection in the pagan philosophy.

Every man was supposed to possess immortality of himself, and death was but a passing into another state of life, a state of bliss, or perchance of purging or torment. No wonder they mocked at the resurrection, when they refused to receive Jesus and the life by Him alone. And how is it now? When the church fell away and gathered to itself the superstitions and errors of the pagan world, it adopted this very same pagan idea of immortality, and hence it comes that the very ideas which caused the men of Athens to mock Paul are universally received today. No wonder, then, that the doctrine of the resurrection has long been set at nought, even in Christian pulpits. Yet it is the grand Gospel of life, and the power of Christ’s life in the believer is the pledge of the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:10-11).

And this truth of life only in Christ, and by the resurrection from the dead at the last day, was to guard against all the delusions of Spiritualism which have swept into the churches in all the world. For as there is no life after death save by the resurrection, it follows that all manifestations claiming to come from the dead are from the devil direct. Therefore, whether men believe or whether they mock, as did the foolish wise men of Mars Hill, the preacher of the Gospel can preach the life to come only by preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

Job also looked for the “blessed hope” of the Lord’s coming. This hope was Job’s anchor in the overwhelming sea of trouble that threatened to sweep him away. He said: “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” It was this hope that also cheered the disciples. Forty days after His ascension Jesus led His disciples out as far as to Bethany, “and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while He

blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24:50-52). When Jesus told the disciples that He was about to go away and leave them, their hearts were filled with sorrow; how then did it come to pass that when He actually went away, they were filled with joy?

An answer is in Acts 1:11, where we read that two angels stood by them as they were steadfastly gazing up into the space where they had seen Jesus disappear, "which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

The promise of Christ's coming is the "blessed hope" that cheers God's people, making us partakers of the Divine nature, fitted for eternity. "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the *blessed hope* and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14)

The ascension of Jesus to heaven is the assurance of His second coming. He said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). Christ crucified is Christ risen again; for the resurrection is inseparable from the crucifixion. When Jesus was laid in the tomb, it was a certainty that He would rise again. God loosed the pains of death, "because it was not possible that He should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). Even so the crucifixion and resurrection embrace the ascension to heaven; for the mighty power which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, lifted Him up to the heavens, to a place at the right hand of God, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion" (Ephesians 1:19-21).

And, the ascension of Christ makes certain and necessary His coming again. It is but the culmination of the crucifixion, the resurrection and the ascension. Of the Lord's Supper, Paul said, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). The death of Christ embraces everything that follows it in Christ's work, – the resurrection, the ascension, and the coming again. No one can perfectly preach "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" without preaching the second coming of Christ.

The ascension of Jesus shows the manner of His second coming. While the disciples beheld Him, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. But we are assured that this same Jesus shall come in like manner as He went into heaven; therefore, "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him" (Revelation 1:7). As He went up, He would gradually recede from the gaze of the disciples, then the cloud alone would be seen, and lastly that would fade from view. So when He comes again, the first thing to be seen will be a white cloud, and after that Christ Himself will be recognised on it. "I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle" (Revelation 14:14). This is at the time of the harvest – the end of the world. First, the people will see "the sign of the Son of man in heaven," namely, the great white cloud, – and then "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30).

The disciples returned from seeing the ascension of Jesus, with great joy, for they had received a most wonderful and blessed promise. Jesus said, "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). At the same time He told them that they would not need to tarry long, for He also said: "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." And then He added, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:5, 8). Whoever has any sense of the meaning of this promise cannot help rejoicing, even in death itself; for the resurrection of the dead is "with power according to the Spirit of holiness" (Romans 1:4); and that is the power which makes us sons of God. So the joy that comes to all who are still looking up into heaven, whither their Lord has gone, is the knowledge of the fact that the power of the coming of the Lord is the power of His personal presence in their hearts by His Holy Spirit (Galatians 4:6).