

Sabbath School Lesson #3 – God or Mammon? – 13-19 January 2018

Christ would have us know that serving God and serving money are mutually exclusive actions, and He would have us know that only in Him are we accepted to God. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11). Our Lesson study this week is taken from: Psalms 33:6-9; Matthew 19:16-22; 1 Peter 1:18; Hebrews 2:14-15; Exodus 9:14; and Psalms 50:10.

Sunday: Christ, the Creator – As there is in our Seventh-day Adventist Church a false doctrine “working to make a nonentity of God and of Christ” (9T 68.1), we must clearly state the relationship between God and Christ when we say Christ is the Creator. First, there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the Creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal; infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by His Holy Spirit (Psalms 139:7). Second, there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom the Father created all things, and by whom they do consist. Third, the Bible is clear that it is “God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9). Who created all things? God. How? “by Jesus Christ.” God made the world, by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). Source of creation is the Father; the means of creation is His Son. “Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is one Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:4). “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him” (1 Corinthians 8:6). Only two Beings were involved in creation, Father and Son. The Father created through His Son.

Ellen White says, “The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate – a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.’ John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father – one in nature, in character, in purpose – the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. ‘His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.’ Isaiah 9:6. His ‘goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.’ Micah 5:2. And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: ‘The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting.... When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.’ Proverbs 8:22-30” (Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p 34). Notice Ellen White refers to Christ’s Father as “the Sovereign of the universe”. She does not state that Christ is the Sovereign with Him. She also attributes Proverbs 8:22-30 to Christ. Christ says of Himself: “When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: ... When He prepared the heavens, I was there: ... Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him” (Pro 8:22-30). Christ is still God’s delight! (Matt 3:17). Christ is God by nature. “God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God” (8T 268.3). “The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality” (*Upward Look*, p 367).

Monday: Son of God/Son of Man – Whilst the Lesson has not elaborated, again, given the false doctrine in our Seventh-day Adventist Church, we must be very clear that Christ is literally the Son of God. Our Seventh-day Adventist Church falsely teach that the one God of the Bible is made up of three Individual Beings that have always existed, that is none of them having beginning of days. That in eternity past they got together in council and took on roles, that is, role of Father, role of Son and role of Holy Spirit. It is role-play; Jesus is not God’s Son in this doctrine because He is the Lord God Almighty in the exact same sense as the Father in trinitarian sense. And, that the terms Father and Son are simply to show us their close relationship. Our church says: “A plan of salvation was encompassed in the covenant made by the Three Persons of the Godhead, who possessed the attributes of Deity equally. In order to eradicate sin and rebellion from the universe and to restore harmony and peace, one of the divine Beings accepted, and entered into, the role of the Father, another the role of the Son. The remaining divine Being, the Holy Spirit, was also to participate in effecting the plan of salvation. All of this took place before sin and rebellion transpired in heaven” (Gordon Jenson, *Adventist Review*, October 31, 1996, p.12 – Week of Prayer readings, article: ‘Jesus the Heavenly Intercessor’). “Another important point involves how we interpret the Bible. Here the issue pertains to whether we should interpret some passages literally or whether we may treat them more figuratively. Maybe we could illustrate this way. While we often refer to

Jesus as the Son and frequently call the first person of the Godhead the Father, do we really want to take such expressions in a totally literal way? Or would it be more appropriate to interpret them in a more metaphorical way that draws on selective aspects of sonship and fatherhood” (Whidden, Moon and Reeve, *The Trinity*, p. 94). “The Father-Son relationship in the Godhead should be understood in a metaphorical sense, not in a literal sense” (Max Hatton, *Understanding the Trinity*, p. 97). But the Bible says, “He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son” (1 John 2:22)!

Do not think the eternal pre-existence of Christ is co-eternal pre-existence with God His Father. The Jews made a similar human mistake. “Christ shows them that, although they might reckon His life to be less than fifty years, yet His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures” (Ellen White, ST 3 May 1899). Human computation of time is limited to the beginning of creation; before that there is no computation of time, no figures by which it can be measured. Do not ally with Satan to “obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God” (TDG 128.1) based on human view of eternity.

Our Adventist pioneers were clear that Christ was literally the Son of God. “It is true that there are many sons of God, but Christ is the ‘only begotten Son of God,’ and therefore the Son of God in a sense in which no other being ever was or ever can be. The angels are sons of God, as was Adam (Job 38:7; Luke 3:38), by creation; Christians are the sons of God by adoption (Romans 8:14, 15), but Christ is the Son of God by birth” (EJ Waggoner, CHR 12.1) – this was echoed and endorsed by Ellen White: “A complete offering has been made; 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, and in all the brightness of His majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Ellen White, ST, 30 May 1895). Ellen White does not say Father and Son are equal in age. Christ said, “the Father is greater than I” (John 14:28); “The Father was greater than the Son in that He was first. The Son was equal with the Father in that He had received all things from the Father” (James White, RH, 4 January 1881).

Tuesday: Christ, the Redeemer – The text says, “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). But the giving was not all on the part of the Father. Both Father and Son shared equally in this, as in all things else. Paul says of Christ that He “*gave Himself* for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, *according to the will of God* and our Father” (Galatians 1:4), (see also Titus 2:13-14). But while the Father and the Son shared equally in this work, the Son was the one in whom the Father was revealed (see John 1:18 and 14:7-9). Paul also expressly declares, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19); while John expresses, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us” (1 John 3:16); and Ellen White reports, “Said the angel, ‘Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no.’ It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His darling Son to die for them” (EW 127.1). We can know the measure of God’s love for man only as we “know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (Ephesians 3:19); and we can learn this only from Calvary. God is our Redeemer in Christ Jesus.

Wednesday: A Jealous God – God is a jealous God, but this by no means indicates that He has any selfish sensitiveness for His own dignity. His jealousy is our salvation. Paul says: “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:2) – jealous “with godly jealousy,” for God is and there is no other. God is jealous when He sees men given to idolatry, jealous for their sakes because He sees them going to nothing. “For all the gods of the nations *are* idols” – ‘nothing’ (Psalms 96:5). When the work that Christ has ascended to do in heaven is accomplished, He will “fill all things” (Ephesians 4:10). And then there will be no room in the universe for idols or their worshippers.

Thursday: True Ownership – We belong to God, for through His Son He created and redeemed us. We are servants or slaves of Christ. There are many who are willing to be known as servants of Christ, who would most strongly object to being considered slave; yet the Greeks knew no such distinction; and the apostles signed themselves unqualifiedly, *slaves* of Jesus Christ. That is what we are in truth, and why should we seek to shut our eyes to the reality? “What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and *ye are not your own! For ye are bought with a price*” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). That states the case exactly; we are slaves; we have been duly bought and paid for, and we are not our own; we have no manner of claim on ourselves, our time, our talents, our property, or anything that may pertain to us. Our bodies are not our own, but, together with soul and spirit, belong to Him who has purchased us.