

Sabbath School Lesson #8 – Worship the Creator – 19-25 May 2018

Christ revealed to John the call to return to true worship that will be made in these last days. To that revelation, John writes: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6). The message is proclaimed in a loud voice (verse 7). A person cries with a loud voice in order to make many people hear; and this message is preparing the way for the coming of the Lord. As we come nearer to the end, the louder must the message be proclaimed. If you saw a man approaching a precipice, you would cry out, to warn him of his danger. If he did not pay any attention, you would cry louder; and the nearer he approached, unconscious of his danger, the louder you would cry. Even so the nearer we come to the end of the world, which will be the destruction of those who are not looking for it, the louder and more clear must the Gospel message announcing it ring forth. The scripture which we are studying has a more direct application to the people of this time than to any other people that ever lived.

Sunday: The Universality of the Gospel – The closing message of the Gospel, which is “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6), is but the last note of the song which was begun in Eden, after the fall, and which the angels echoed to the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem. As Christ was sent that the world through Him might be saved, so are His disciples sent to all the world; not aside from the Master, but together with Him for the assurance is, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). The universality of the gospel message is due to the fact that all nations have drunk the wine of Babylon (Revelation 18:3).

And as previous to the first advent of Christ a message went forth “in the Spirit and power of Elias” to those of whom Christ spoke as “not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29), although they made a great deal of the “form of godliness,” so now in messages going forth, “the everlasting Gospel,” in fulfilment of the prophecy, “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” A careful reading of the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Revelation will show that it is describing a time when worship is being directed to some other than the true God (13:4, 8, 12, 15; 14:9-10), and just then “the everlasting Gospel” is preached “with a loud voice,” just as in the time of Elijah and of John the Baptist, urging the worship of the true God. That the issue at stake now is the same as of old, is shown from the fact that those who receive this special message of “the everlasting Gospel” are described in verse 12 as following: “Here are they that *keep the commandments of God.*” In Elijah’s time they forsook the commandments of God and followed Baal; in the time of John the Baptist they “reject the commandment of God” and follow the “tradition of the elder;” in our time there is “the form of godliness” without the power, and the same putting of the authority of man in the place of the plain Word of God. In all three cases God sends forth His Gospel message of warning, revealing His power, so that men may be “without excuse.”

Monday: The Thief on the Cross and the “Everlasting Gospel” – The gospel, first preached in Eden (Genesis 3:15), saved the thief on the cross. Men are saved only by righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. It is not abstract righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ’s real life “unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference” (Romans 3:22), that saves us. The instant any man, however sinful he may be, believes on the Lord Jesus, and confesses Him, he is counted righteous. God declares him righteous, and that makes him righteous. If he should die that very hour, as was the case with the thief on the cross, he would be saved, and would appear in heaven as though he had never sinned. Thousands will appear in the kingdom of God without fault, who never in their lifetime knew all the commandments of God, nor all that is involved in the faith of Jesus. Consequently not all the righteousness of the law has been exhibited in their lives. They have unconsciously been living in violation of some precepts of the law, but from all these secret, hidden faults they have been cleansed. But these have learned the lesson of submission to God, and were willing to serve Him. They can be taken to heaven, hence, they will make no break in its harmony, for the instant they see the fullness of God’s righteousness they will embrace it with joy.

But if all the righteous were saved like the thief on the cross, there would be an opportunity for the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night (Revelation 12:10), to say that it is impossible for God to make men absolutely perfect in this world; that He is obliged to take them to heaven, and get them out of the reach of Satan’s temptations, in order to make them perfectly righteous. To be sure, he can be confronted with the case of Christ, who lived absolutely perfect life, in spite of all Satan’s temptations; but he would evade the force of that by saying, as men, and even Christian men, do now, that Christ was different from other men. Therefore, in

order to show that Christ was here in this world with no advantages over other men, and that what God did by Him, He is able to do for all, to exalt the power of God, to show that Christ has power over all flesh, and effectually to stop the mouths of all gainsayers, God will not send Jesus the second time until He can point to a people who, like Jesus, are absolutely without fault, and who, surrounded by sin, and subject to Satan's onslaughts, live entirely above the power of sin and death. They will be complete possessors of the victory – the life of Christ – that hath overcome the world. Thus will not only the mouths of all the wicked be stopped, but there will be given the perfect witness of God's power to salvation, which will draw many in the last days from the world to God.

Tuesday: Fear God and Give Glory to Him – To fear God and give glory to Him, is the whole duty of man. Let us live in recognition that the Lord is “the Author and Finisher” and to allow all our works to be begun and wrought and finished in Him, in righteousness, because He is righteous. The devil has sought to beguile us from “the simplicity that is in Christ,” and has succeeded; now as the end approaches, the call is sounded “with a loud voice” for us to fear God and give Him glory. It is one of the signs of the times that “in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, ... having the form of godliness but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Forms and ceremonies, and theology falsely so called, have been substituted for that true knowledge of God through which grace and peace are multiplied, the traditions of men have been followed instead of the Word of the living God, and so now that message is demanded which says, “Fear God, and give glory to Him.” The nothingness of man and the greatness of God, the inability of man to save himself and his consequent need of a mighty Saviour, man's weakness and God's power, “All flesh is grass,” “Behold your God,” this is the message which is now to go to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Thus will the way of the Lord be prepared.

Wednesday: The Hour of His Judgment Has Come – “And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming” (1 John 2:28). The Lord requires good works in His people. He wants to have “a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14), and He desires it so much that He gave Himself for us that the object might be accomplished. When the Lord, who calleth those things that be not as though they were, gives Himself to make us zealous of good works, it is certain that good works thus secured will be worthy of Him. In other words, His own works will appear in those whom He redeems from all iniquity. The only way that this can, is for the Lord Himself to dwell in men, and work in them to will and to do. “He gave Himself for us.” “We are His workmanship.” We are His workmanship by faith. When we cease from our own works and stop all boasting, and confess that it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves, we leave the way open for the Lord to display His own infinite workmanship. Whoever thus commits His way entirely to the Lord may rest in the knowledge that all is well. The good works which will be required of him in the Judgment, when God, without respect of persons, will judge according to every man's work, are already prepared. Indeed, they are finished; for the works of God were finished from the foundation of the world. We were then created in Christ Jesus, and when we acknowledge this, we know that His works are ours. “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:11). A man who has Christ may work with confidence and when he has accomplished any work he knows that he has not done it, but the Lord as done it, and so does not glory in himself. He can only thank the Lord for the answer to the prayer, “Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants” (Psalms 90:16). So the Christian life is made up. There is no fear of the hour of judgment, for those who live by faith are just. This is why the Gospel calls on men to glorify God, “for the hour of His judgment is come,” and worship the Creator of all things in the universe. To give glory to God by allowing Him to reveal His creative power in us, and confessing that it is to Him alone we owe the works thus wrought, is the preparation needed for the hour of His judgment. The rest to which the Lord calls us is so perfect that it is not disturbed by the anticipation of the most searching judgment. “Ye are complete in Him.” The perfect love which is shed abroad in our hearts, fulfilling the law, casts out all fear.

Thursday: Worship the One Who Made the Heavens and Earth – The keeping of the first commandment is the necessary preparation for the coming of the Lord. “We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” We shall then see Him as He is, because we shall have already been changed into His image by holding Him. Therefore to this end the message is proclaimed, “Behold your God!” No other God is to intervene to shut off the view. Because the hour of His Judgment is come, we are to “worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” This, we see, is nothing more than the repetition of the first commandment. We are to know Him only, the Father, and Christ came to declare Him. The commandment is life everlasting (John 12:50), and it is eternal life to know God (John 17:3). Those who know Him will put their trust in Him, and when they see Him will say, “Lo, this is our God.”