

Sabbath School Lesson #13 – The Return of Our Lord Jesus – 23-29 June 2018

Christ will come in shining glory. “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:27). There is but one more coming of the Lord, to which we are directed to look. The Scriptures speak only of two comings: One which is already in the past, and the second coming of Christ. “Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28). The promise is, “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). “Again,” means ‘once more,’ and that will complete the sum of His comings to this earth, aside from His continual presence by His Spirit.

Sunday: The Day of the Lord – “The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon My holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually; yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been” (Obadiah 15-16). After Saul was slain, the Philistines thought to do away also with David, who was anointed king in his stead; but when they attempted it, they were smitten; and in the record (1 Chronicles 14:11), David says: “God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand like the breaking forth of waters; therefore, they called the name of that place Baal-perazim,” which means, literally, breaking forth. In Isaiah 28:21, this incident is made mention of by the prophet to show the manner of Christ’s coming. “For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim.” For many centuries the Lord has been hidden from the children of men; yes not wholly, for He has revealed Himself and His workings to the people in messages of salvation. But His hiding will not be for ever. There will come a time when He “shall rise up as in mount Perazim,” – burst upon an astonished world in all His glory.

“As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” That will be His coming the “second time without sin unto salvation;” when He will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God. But this vengeance is not against the individual, as such, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” Men are destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s coming, – His glory that is about Him as a consuming fire, – because they are inseparably connected with ungodliness and unrighteousness. There are others who will “dwell with everlasting burnings,” and the reason that they can dwell there is because in them is no ungodliness nor unrighteousness. It is a comforting thought, that though the “day of the Lord’s fierce anger” is “near, even at the door,” yet we need not be of them who cry for the rocks and mountains to “fall upon us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” As the Lord our refuge, we will say, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

Monday: Daniel and the Second Coming of Jesus – In the second chapter of Daniel the nations of earth are represented as an image composed of various metals. The kingdom of Christ is represented as a stone cut out of the mountain *without hands*, with the following result: “Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:35). That image represented the nations of earth until the end of time. The head of gold represented Babylon, which passed away hundreds of years before the first advent of Christ. The breast and arms of silver, representing Medo-Persia, long since ceased to figure in the affairs of the world. The brass, representing Grecia, crumbled to pieces under the iron monarchy of Rome; and Rome itself, represented by the legs of iron, went into a decline soon after one of its governors hearkened to the wicked counsels of the people, and crucified the Lord of glory. Then it became divided, retaining some of the strength of the iron, but incapable of united action, and in that condition, it has been for over fifteen hundred years. That is a long time as men count, but not long enough for God to forget. We are living in the days when we must expect as the next great event the smiting of the nations, and their utter destruction by the Lord. In Psalms 2:8-9, we read these words to Christ: “Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Revelation 2:26-27 address the same words to the saints of God, and the very same power that Jesus Christ Himself receives is given to them: “He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of My Father.” To have the lowest place in the kingdom of God and Christ, is to

be exalted to a place higher than that of the kings of the earth; while the weakest soul that can say with full assurance of faith, "Behold, God is my strength," has more power than all the nations.

Tuesday: Long-Term Prospects – He who loves, always wishes to be with the object of his love. For love of men, Christ came to earth to dwell with them; and then, as He was about to return to heaven again, He prayed, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am" (John 17:24). In like manner also, they who loved the Lord, long for nothing so much as to be with Him where He is. The disciple who loved the Lord the most, and who leaned on His breast at the last supper, begins the Revelation with the words, "Behold, He cometh with clouds," and closes with the prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," in response to the promise of Jesus, "Surely I come quickly" (Revelation 1:7; 22:20). When the disciples were sorrowing over the fact that Jesus had made known to them, that He was about to go away, He said to comfort them, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And 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 14:1-3). The coming of the Lord is the Christian's hope – the "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). The apostle, more than any other, wrote of the coming of the Lord. In all his epistles he had something to say about it. He loved the Lord, and therefore he loved His appearing. Just before his martyrdom, Paul said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

In writing to the Philippians, he said, "What I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Philippians 1:22-23). Nothing of selfishness in the desire of Paul; he was the last person in the world to think about himself, and to spend his time sighing for rest. He had no desire to leave his work before it was done. There was no joy to him in thinking of leaving the work undone, for someone else to finish.

Wednesday: In the Clouds of Heaven – Christ, speaking of events connected with His coming, said: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30). Now notice how the coming of Christ will correspond with His departure. When He departed, a cloud received Him out of sight; so the cloud must have been the last thing seen. When He shall come again, the first thing that will be seen will be a white cloud. This will be "the sign of the Son of man in heaven." Then as it draws nearer, the form of Jesus will be discerned, sitting upon the cloud, and then all His glory will be revealed. He will come as He departed. But whereas only a few saw Him go away, "every eye shall see Him" when He returns. He will come "in the glory of His Father" (Matthew 16:27), accompanied by "all the holy angels" (Matthew 25:31). He will then "sit upon the throne of His glory," and "a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him" (Psalms 50:3). He shall descend "with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:16), and "the heavens and the earth shall shake" (Joel 3:16). None will be able to hide from their eyes "the brightness of His coming;" "for as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of man be in His day" (Luke 17:24).

Thursday: The Living and the Dead – When Christ comes the second time, as great a change will take place in His saints as in the earth itself. Their bodies will be restored to the condition of Eden beauty and perfection. We are but strangers and sojourners on this present evil world, and "our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Philippians 3:20-21). "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." There will be no secrecy about Christ's second coming. "For as lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." When He came the first time, angels announced the glad tidings; but when He comes the second time He Himself will proclaim it with a voice that will shake the earth, and open every grave (see John 5:28-29). "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).