

Sabbath School Lesson #11 – The Seven Last Plagues – 9-15 March 2019

Christ is coming to take His saints, but before then there will be poured out the seven plagues to punish the wicked. But God does nothing rashly. He will not punish men for the commission of deeds which they had no means of knowing were wrong. He is righteous, and never will this be more manifest than when seven last plagues are poured out upon the wicked. Then will the saints of Christ be constrained to say: "Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest" (Revelation 15:3-4). That God is righteous in executing judgment upon the ungodly, is shown by the apostle Paul in the statement that he has revealed Himself to all men (Romans 1:20). And "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, without these their voice is heard" (Psalms 19:1-3). Everyone who sees the heavens must know that they were created by some power greater than the things created, so the possession of the natural senses should be sufficient to show all the folly of worshiping inanimate nature.

Sunday: The Meaning of the Seven Last Plagues – The last plagues will cause deadly diseases, but God's people will be immune – for they have "made the Lord, which is My refuge, even The Most High, Thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" (Psalms 91:1-10). Let no one imagine God's people will suddenly obtain immunity from disease. When the seven last plagues begin to fall, God's faithful health reformers will simply go on living as they have in the lesser plagues that have been in the earth. God's people will keep all God's health laws, because the full light of the law will have shone upon them. The law will be in their minds, and written in their heart. So in the time of the plagues they will be free from disease, not because God arbitrarily makes them so, but because they have loved the truth of law of life. They know every word of God, and live by it. In the Scripture where God promises to "take sickness away" from His people, who keep His commandments, He says, "I will bless thy bread and thy water" (Exodus 23:25-26), indicating that their food will have much to do with their perfect health. Before the last plagues come, they will have passed through lesser plagues by practicing health reform in the strict sense, eating only that which is good, and refrain from everything that defile the body-temple. Whoever now neglect health reform, will in the plagues see the force of the warning: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (1 Corinthians 3:17).

Monday: The Outpouring of the Last Plagues – The psalmist says, "thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday" (Psalms 91:5-6). That is a blessed condition! what perfect rest and content, to be quiet from fear of evil; to know that we are immune when the pestilence rages. Who may have this confidence? He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, making the Lord his habitation. But many say this applies in "the time of trouble," when the seven last plagues shall be on the earth. Very true: but how can we know that God will protect us in the time of trouble to come, if we do not have His protection in present troubles? And if men do not now take God's presence as the shield against disease, how can they trust in it when "sudden destruction" comes? Will they not be found unprepared? "God is our refuge and strength" today, as surely as He ever will be, if we will but take Him as such. It is possible, and is God's desire for us, that we shall be as free from the ravages of the lesser plagues now, even from preventable diseases, as when a thousand fall at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand during the last plagues.

Tuesday: Drying Up the Euphrates River – This prophecy is misapplied by the Lesson writer to Babylon. The correct application is in the book by Uriah Smith called *Daniel and the Revelation*, a book Ellen White endorsed as containing "solid, eternal truth for this time" {1MR 61.2}. "Euphrates river is a symbol of the nation occupying the territory through which that river flows. The drying up of the river in this sense would be the consumption of the Turkish empire, accompanied with more or less destruction of its subjects. Thus we should have literal judgments upon men, as the result of this plague, as in the case of all the others"

– Euphrates dries up to prepare the way for the kings. When Turkey (the king of the north) plant its tent in Jerusalem, it will come to an end and none shall help him (Daniel 11:45) – see the booklet on the website entitled: King of the North. “Under the sixth plague, that symbolic river will be clean dried up, Turkey will be no more, and the way will be all open for the nations to rush to the Holy Land. The kings of the East, the nationalities, powers, and kingdoms lying east of Palestine, will act a conspicuous part in the matter; for Joel says in reference to this scene, ‘Let the heathen be wakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat’” [Joel 3:12] (Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, 1882 edition, pp 732-40).

Wednesday: Satan’s Last Great Deception – Whilst others think the great deception is in the future, it is right here in the Lesson where the writer again misapply Revelation 16:12. We must read from Smith’s book. “And it should be noticed that the drying up takes place to prepare the way of the kings of the East, that is, regular military organizations.” “For what is the way of these kings to be prepared? To come up to the great battle. Where is the battle to be fought? At Jerusalem. See Joel and Zephaniah.” “The kings of the East, the nationalities, powers, and kingdoms lying east of Palestine, will act conspicuous part in the matter” (ibid).

Thursday: Gathering for the Battle of Armageddon – The spirits of devils “gather them to the battle of that great day of God ... into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Revelation 16:13-16). “The nations of the world are eager for conflict; but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish. Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. Vessels, with their living cargo, will be entombed in the great deep. All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of satanic agencies. But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon ... The battle of Armageddon will be fought, and that day must find none of us sleeping. Wide awake we must be” {Ellen White, Mar 257}.

Armageddon is Greek name of the place, derived from the Hebrew ‘Har Megiddo,’ meaning ‘Mount of Megiddo’, but more of a ‘hill’ than a ‘mount.’ In Bible history, Megiddo was a place overlooking the plain in the tribe of Manasseh and a place of significant battles. First, it was at Megiddo where Barak and Deborah destroyed Sisera’s army (Judges 5). Second, it was at Megiddo that Pharaoh Necho slew Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:20-25; 2 Kings 23:29-30). The latter battle caused great lamentation in Judah. Pharaoh Necho matched his great armies and came through the land of Judah to attack the Assyrian stronghold of Carchemish. It was in God’s plan that the king of Egypt should do this, and when Josiah thought to arrest the progress of his army, Pharaoh-Necho sent him a warning message from God, saying that he was not come against Josiah, and had no desire to meet him in battle; “for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that He destroy thee not” (2 Chronicles 35:21). Notwithstanding this warning, Josiah persisted in his attempt to stop the king of Egypt, and was fatally wounded in the battle at Megiddo. There was great lamentation at his death in all Judah and Jerusalem.

The battle of Armageddon will be the outcome of the envy of the nations. All that now hinders it is the angels holding back the political strife, while God’s Spirit is striving to turn men from their own ways. When that Spirit is rejected, the crash will not be long delayed. The “King of the North” will play a part in leading up to the battle of Armageddon. The angel said of this move: “And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end and none shall help him” (Daniel 11:45). Others assign the battle of Armageddon to a spiritual battle. But our spiritual battles goes on in our hearts, “for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood” (Ephesians 6:12). Angels fight in unseen battle, it is never described in terms like the battle of Armageddon. Angel Gabriel told Daniel, “I return to fight *with* the prince of Persia” (Daniel 10:20) – unseen battle *with* or alongside Persia to hold back devils influencing nations against Persia. That is what the angels holding the four winds also do; the spiritual war is not the battle of Armageddon. Those who spiritualise Armageddon also spiritualise Daniel 11:45 and ignore the conflicts in the Middle East. Armageddon is a place where nations will gather to the final conflict in the Middle East after the move by the King of the North. And in this the king of the North is to come to his end, and none shall help him. What will follow? “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people ...” (Daniel 12:1).