

Sabbath School Lesson #12 – Judgment on Babylon – 16-22 March 2019

Christ would have His faithful saints continue the call out of Babylon. “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities” (Revelation 18:4-5).

Sunday: The Harlot Babylon – John says that he saw a woman sitting on many waters (Revelation 17:1); and the angel told him (verse 15) that these waters were “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” “That this apostate woman is a symbol of the Roman Catholic church, is generally believed by Protestants. Between this church and the kings of the earth there has been illicit connection, and with the wine of her fornication, or her false doctrines, the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk. ... This woman is explicitly called Babylon. Is Rome, then, Babylon, to the exclusion of all other religious bodies? No; from the fact that she is called the mother of harlots, which shows that there are other independent religious organizations, which constitute the apostate daughters, and belong to the same great family” (Uriah Smith, D&R, 1882 edition, 747-748). Churches are drunk with the wine of Babylon – false doctrines of Catholicism, chief of which is the inexplicable trinity.

Monday: The Harlot Riding on the Scarlet Beast – “This prophecy is more definite than others applicable to the Roman power, in that it distinguishes between church and State. We here have the woman, the church, seated upon a scarlet-colored beast, the civil power, by which she is upheld, and which she controls and guides to her own ends, as a rider controls a horse.” “The vesture and decorations of this woman, as brought to view in verse 4, are in striking harmony with the application made of this symbol; for purple and scarlet are the chief colors in the robes of popes and cardinals; and among the myriads of precious stones which adorn her service, according to an eye-witness, silver is scarcely known, and gold itself looks but poorly. And from the golden cup in her hand, symbol of purity of doctrine and profession, which should have contained only that which is pure, upright, and in accordance with truth, there came forth only abominations, and wine of her fornication, fit symbol of her abominable doctrines, and still more abominable practices” (Uriah Smith, 1882, p 748).

Tuesday: The Identification of the Scarlet Beast – In Revelation 17:8, the scarlet beast is identified as this: “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” “The beast of which the angel here speaks is evidently the scarlet beast. A wild beast like the one thus introduced, is the symbol of an oppressive and persecuting power; and while the Roman power, as a nation, had a long, uninterrupted existence, it passed through certain phases, during which this symbol would be inapplicable to it, and during which time, consequently the beast, in such prophecies as the present, might be said not to be, or not to exist. Thus: Rome in its pagan form was a persecuting power in its relation to the people of God, during which time it constituted the beast that was. But the empire was nominally converted to Christianity. There was a transition from paganism to another phase of religion, falsely called Christian; and during a brief period, while this transition was going on, it lost its ferocious and persecuting character, and then it could be said of the beast, that it was not. Time passed on, and it degenerated into popery, and again assumed its blood-thirsty and oppressive character, and then constituted the beast ‘that yet is,’ or in John’s day was to be” (Uriah Smith, 1882, p 750).

Wednesday: The Seven Heads of the Beast – The Lesson writer says that “no single view has been agreed upon by all Adventist interpreters” and goes on to present a false albeit a ‘popular’ view among our theologians. The correct old view is that these seven heads of the beast represent seven forms of government that have existed in the Roman Empire – a view derived from Smith’s 1882 book that contains “solid, eternal truth for this time” (1MR 61.2). Seventh-day Adventist ministers need not err in this teaching if they were to heed the Spirit of Prophecy and read Smith’s 1882 book, for the prophet specifically tells them: They “will find *Daniel and the Revelation* an invaluable help. They need to understand this book. It speaks of past, present, and future, laying out the path so plainly that none need err therein.

Those who will diligently study this book will have no relish for the cheap sentiments presented by those who have a burning desire to get out something new and strange to present to the flock of God. The rebuke of God is upon all such teachers. They need that one teach them what is meant by godliness and truth. The great, essential questions which God would have presented to the people are found in *Daniel and the Revelation*. There is found solid, eternal truth for this time. Everyone needs the light and information it contains" (1MR 61.2, 1901). "Everything that can be done should be done to circulate *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*. I know of no other book that can take the place of this one. It is God's helping hand" (21MR, 444.3, 1901). But "God's helping hand" is counted as error by these men who have made the Spirit of Prophecy of none effect. Let us read from the book:

"The seven heads are explained to be, first, seven mountains, and then seven kings or forms of government, for the expression in verse 10, 'and there are seven kings,' should read, and *these* are seven kings. Five are fallen, says the angel, or passed away; one is; the sixth, was then reigning; another was to come, and continue a short space; and when the beast re-appeared in its bloody and persecuting character, it was to be under the eighth form of government which was to continue till the beast went into perdition. The seven forms of government that have existed in the Roman empire, are usually enumerated as follows: 1. Kingly. 2. Consular. 3. Decemvirate. 4. Dictatorial. 5. Triumvirate. 6. Imperial; and 7. Papal. Kings, Consuls, Decemvirs, Dictators, and Triumvirs, had passed away in John's day. He was living under the imperial form. Two more were to arise after his time. One was only to continue a short space, and hence is not usually reckoned among the heads; while the last, which is usually denominated the seventh, is in reality the eighth. The head which was to succeed the imperial and continue a short space could not be the papal; for that has continued longer than all the rest put together. We understand, therefore, that the papal head is the eighth, and that a head of short continuance intervened between the imperial and papal. In fulfillment of this, we read that after the imperial form had been abolished, there was a ruler who, for about the space of 60 years, governed Rome under the title of the "Exarchate of Ravenna." Thus we have the connecting link between the imperial and papal heads. The third phase of the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, is the Roman power under the rule of the papacy, and in this form it ascends out of the bottomless pit, or bases its power on pretensions which have no foundation but a mixture of Christian errors and pagan superstitions" (Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, 1882 edition, pp 750-751).

Thursday: The Judgment of Babylon – The Lesson writer is wrong to say "the battle of Armageddon is not a military battle in the Middle East but the final conflict of the Second Coming in which Satan and his confederacy fight against Christ and His angelic host." No hint in the Bible that Christ at His Second Coming will wage war with Satan. The only war fought by Christ and His angels against Satan and his angels was in heaven (Revelation 12:7-9). That Armageddon is war between nations, Ellen White says, "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}. Uriah Smith says, "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" (Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, 1882 edition, 740).

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).