

Sabbath School Lesson #14 – All Things New – 24-30 December 2022

Christ will make all things new. “And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Revelation 21:5). Sin is death, and when it entered the world, everything began to grow old and show the marks of decay. Ever since then there has been a steady decline till the earth has waxed old like a garment (Isaiah 51:6). But a change will come. When that is removed which caused the earth and all that is in it to grow old, then everything will be new again. Then God will wipe away tears from all faces, sorrow and crying will be no more, “death will be swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:54), “the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose” (Isaiah 35:1), and “the former things have come to pass” (Isaiah 42:9).

Sunday: A New Heaven and a New Earth – Is Isaiah 65 describing what would have been or the reality of what is to be? It is describing the reality of what is to be. But the Lesson writer takes a different view in this para: ‘The book of Isaiah provides interesting glimpses of how the earth would have been if Israel as a nation had remained faithful to their covenant with God (Isa. 65:17–25; Isa. 66:22, 23; compare with Deuteronomy 28). The whole environment with its various expressions of life would have grown more and more toward God’s original plan; that is, before the entrance of sin.’ If the Lesson writer is correct, then it means Israel in this old-earth would have fulfilled Isaiah 65:21-22 “And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat.” This can only be fulfilled in the new-earth, for men in this old-earth build, get old men, die, and leave it to others. Moreover, “as in Adam all die” (1 Corinthians 15:22), no amount of Israel living up to the faith would have eradicated sin and men dying in this old-earth state, and if they die, then “another inhabit.” In Isaiah 65 is given a description identical to John 21, with some parts in Isaiah 65 showing what transpires of old-earth state before entering new-earth state. First, Isaiah 65:20: “There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” Second, John 21:4: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” The first clause of Isaiah 65:20, shows that there will “be no more thence,” from the time the new-earth state is brought in, “an infant of days,” (a short-lived child), “or an old man who hath not filled his days” (premature old age). All will eternally glow with the vigour of youth. The latter clause of the verse speaks of death, and cannot therefore apply to the new earth, for of the new earth state, John says: “There shall be no more death.” If we abide by the rendering of king James’ version, it must apply to what transpires just as the new state is ushered in. The sinner, although he be an hundred years old, is accursed: Not permitted to enter the land, and dies a child, compared to the endless life those are to enjoy who live in the new earth state. In Isaiah 65:20, we are carried to the time when the new earth is to be created. “There shall be no more thence an infant of days.” When? After the new earth is created. Why shall there be no such thing there? “For the child shall die an hundred years old,” etc. But when is this child of one hundred years to die? If in the new earth, it spoils the text; for if there is death there, there would of course “be an infant of days” (a short-lived child) and “an old man who had not filled his days” (premature old age). But as this dying here spoken of is one reason assigned why there shall be no dying in the new earth, it must be that it is to take place just at the point where that work of creating the new heavens and new earth takes place. But who is meant by the “child a hundred years old?” It is the sinner who may be a hundred years old. Who is to be destroyed at that time? It cannot be the righteous; for they will then be immortal, to die no more. Peter says: “But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:7). The same fire that purifies the earth, destroys the wicked; so it must be the wicked who are referred to here by the term child. Although they may be a hundred years of age, they are but children in age compared with the lives of the saints who are to live forever. What about Isaiah 65:22, “the days of a tree are the days of

my people.” As the days of what tree? Tree of life. He who eat of that tree lives forever; for God drove Adam out of the garden, lest in this old-earth state he “eat of the tree of life and live forever” (Genesis 3:22). What about Isaiah 65:23, “Nor bring forth children for trouble,” will there be childbearing? The bringing forth does not refer to children that shall be brought forth there, but to the result of their labours, which shall be produced by them. Their offspring are their children born here who with their parents will be permitted to enjoy that happy state.

Monday: In the Temple of God – Shall in the new-earth the great multitude enter the temple or only the 144,000 enter therein? Only the 144,000 enter the temple. The Lesson writer take a different view in this para: ‘Some people speak of heaven itself as being God’s sanctuary. But the book of Revelation refers to a specific sanctuary/temple within the New Jerusalem, where God’s throne and the sea of glass are located (Rev. 4:2–6, Rev. 7:9–15, Rev. 15:5–8). There the great multitude of saints from all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues will worship God forever (Rev. 7:9–17).’ For ‘there’ (in the temple) a great multitude to worship they must enter, but EG White says, “And as we were about to enter the temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, “Only the 144,000 enter this place,” and we shouted, “Alleluia!” {1T 68.2}. “This temple was supported by seven pillars, I saw there tables of stone in which the names of the 144,000 were engraved in letters of gold.” {1T 69.1}. The questions asked of John by one elder, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?” (Rev 7:13) taken in connection with John’s answer, “Sir, thou knowest,” implying that John did not know, would be devoid of all point, if they had reference to the whole of the great multitude now before him. John did know the whole throng as from all nations and tongues; but did not recognise the 144,000 he had seen sealed on earth as they now stood among the redeemed throng. The special features given in verses 14-15 apply emphatically to 144,000. For example, that they “came out of great tribulation” is emphatic to 144,000 than to the great multitude (see Daniel 12:1; Jer. 30:4-7; Rev. 15-16).

Tuesday: In the Presence of God – The Lesson writer rightly asks and answers, ‘Does it mean that the saints in heaven will never see God the Father? Not at all.’ But what he did not ask and trinitarians cannot answer, if God is a trinity, will we see ‘God the Holy Spirit’?

Wednesday: No More Death and Tears – What is your motivation for serving Christ? Is it self-centred to escape more death and tears? If it never goes beyond that, it is the root of legalism. All egocentric motivation based on fear of hell or hope of reward is Old Covenant in nature and need to be overcome. All self-centred motivation is “under the law,” old covenant, and it will surely fail in the final crisis. We need to come to “the knowledge of the Son of God ... unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ... grow up into Him in all things” (Ephesians 4:13-15), that only “the love of Christ constraineth us” (2 Corinthians 5:14) and be motivated by a self-forgetful concern for Christ, that the burden of sorrow Christ feels for the world may be lifted, that “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isaiah 53:11). “Then Jesus looked upon His redeemed saints; their countenances were radiant with glory; and as He fixed His loving eyes upon them, He said, with His rich, musical voice, “I behold the travail of My soul, and am satisfied. This rich glory is yours to enjoy eternally. Your sorrows are ended. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” I saw the redeemed host bow and cast their glittering crowns at the feet of Jesus, and then, as His lovely hand raised them up, they touched their golden harps and filled all heaven with their rich music and songs to the Lamb” {EW 288.1}.

Thursday: His Name on Their Foreheads – What does it mean and who are these that have His name on their foreheads? For any worshipper, that which is placed at the centre of their thinking is who that they worship. The saints that worship the true God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24), have the “Father’s name written in their foreheads” (Revelation 14:1). The wicked, represented by the harlot, “upon her forehead was a name written, mystery” (Revelation 17:5), for they worship is a mystery god. But the 144,000 worship the true God. They have His name in their forehead: ‘ “Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads” (Revelation 14:1). In this world they served God with their minds and with their hearts, and now He can place His name “on their foreheads.” Christ welcomes them as His children, saying, “Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21).’ {ULe 214.7}.