

## Sabbath School Lesson #12 – Precursors – 14-20 June 2025

**C**hrist would have us receive His own Spirit. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:17). “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (1 John 4:16-18). Christ gave Himself to “deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:15). He who knows and loves the Lord cannot be afraid of Him; and he who is not afraid of the Lord has no need to be afraid of any other person or thing. One of the greatest blessings of the Gospel is the deliverance from fear, whether real or imaginary. Nameless fear, the dread of the unseen and the uncertain, is far more torturous than any evil that can befall us. And even though there be no danger impending, the fear, to a timid person, is none the less terrible. How good, then, to read this testimony: “I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears” (Psalm 34:4). Better still to be able to say, “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid” (Isaiah 12:2). There is nothing more terrible than fear. “Fear hath torment”, but God’s love for us is perfect. It makes no difference if there is no actual danger, the fear of an imaginary evil is as real as the fear of a known peril. But out of all fear the Lord delivers them that trust Him. “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.”

**Sunday: Daniel 2 and the Historicist Approach to Prophecy** – What is “the historicist” method? It is the idea that prophecy follow unbroken linear flow of history, past to present to future. But we find no support in the Bible for this historicist method. Daniel did not use the historicist method to understand the prophecies of Jeremiah on the 70 years of captivity; he simply read Jeremiah and applied that to his present facts. The Christian Jews did not use the historicist method in AD 66 to understand the prophecy of Jesus about the abomination of desolation that Daniel talked of standing in the holy place, they simply read or recalled the words of Jesus and applied them to the present facts. What Jesus had told them is not the history, it is the prophecy they had to see fulfilled. “We are to see in history the fulfillment of prophecy, to study the workings of Providence in the great reformatory movements, and to understand the progress of events in the marshaling of the nations for the final conflict of the great controversy” {8T 307.2}. But we prophecy itself is not dependant on historical events. History in just one part of existence, there is also the present, and there is also the future.

Read Daniel 2:43; how does this one text describe the European nations that followed the kingdom of Rome? The words spoken to Nebuchadnezzar about two thousand six hundred twenty-nine years ago, describe the nations into which the iron kingdom of Rome was divided. “And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.” Time and again, men have dreamed of welding the nations of Europe into one mighty kingdom. Charlemagne tried it. Charles V tried it. Louis XIV tried it. Napoleon tried it. The European Union has tried it. But none have succeeded. A single verse of prophecy was stronger than all their hosts. Their own power was wasted, frittered away, destroyed. But these nations did not become one. “Partly strong and partly broken” was the prophetic description. And such, too, has been the historic fact concerning them.

**Monday: Worshiping the Image** – Read Daniel 3:17-18, the words of the three Hebrew boys in defiance of the king. What does this teach us about faith and what at times it could demand of us? Daniel 3 concerns liberty of conscience. It occurred about two thousand six hundred and twenty-four years ago, in the province of Babylon. Because of the disobedience of the great mass of the children of Israel, the Lord had suffered the whole nation to be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and many of the people had been taken from Jerusalem to Babylon. This Nebuchadnezzar was a heathen king, and so some time after the conquest of Babylon, he “made an image of gold” and set it up for all to worship or

be “cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” We take lessons from the reply of the three young Hebrews, when commanded by the king who had advanced them to posts of honour, to fall down and worship the golden image. The king set up an image to be worshipped and threatened to burn anyone in the furnace who dared refuse to worship the image. The three young Hebrews were not bowing to the image. They believed that God would deliver them from the fiery furnace: “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king” (Daniel 3:17); “but,” said they, “if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Daniel 3:18). Their faith, devotion, and loyalty were dominant in either life or death. This is the loyalty of the true soldier of Christ in all his conflicts with the enemy, in all calls of duty. History abounds in numerous examples of such uncompromising loyalty, beside which all mere human bravery pales into insignificance. This is the faith and loyalty demanded of the soldiers of Christ now.

**Tuesday: Worshipping the Image, Again** – Read Revelation 13:11-17; what is to happen to the saints? The two-horned beast, whose great work is to make an image to the papal beast, “exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him,” – in his presence (Revelation 13:12), – and issues sentence of death against all who refuse to worship the image instead of God (verse 15). We read that, the dragon, with whose voice the two-horned beast speaks, is “wroth with the woman,” – the church, – going “to make war with the remnant of her seed” (Revelation 12:17). We read that “in the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Timothy 3:1). “The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty ... While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God” {GC 605}.

**Wednesday: Early Church Persecution** – Read Acts 12:1-17; who persecuted the early Christians? It was ‘the Church’. In the first Advent of Christ, it was His own people to whom He came, who rejected Him. When He was accused before the Roman governor, it was “the people” – God's chosen people – who cried, “Crucify Him!” When the disciples of Christ were many thousands in number in Jerusalem, they were still a poor, despised sect, and so few in comparison with ‘the people’ who constituted ‘the Church’, that they were compelled to flee for their lives. Then Herod the king stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church. And he killed James with the sword; and when he saw that ‘the people’ were pleased, Herod then proceeded to take Peter also. This same Herod it was who a short time afterwards made an oration to a vast concourse who had assembled to do him honour, “And ‘the people’ gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.” In this “the voice of the people” – ‘the Church’ – was immediately shown to be not the voice of God, for God rebuked their impiety, and caused the vile creature, whom they called a god, to die a loathsome death.

**Thursday: The Mark of the Beast** – In Rev. 14:9, what is the mark of the beast? “As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite “the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; ... because by keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the church's power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin.” .... What then is the change of the Sabbath, but the sign, or mark, of the authority of the Roman Church — “the mark of the beast”? .... But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God. ... He is paying homage to Rome and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshipping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome — “the mark of the beast.” And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive “the mark of the beast” – Ellen White (GC 448-9).