

## 26.12.2020 HEAVEN, EDUCATION AND ETERNAL LEARNING

***Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. 1 Corinthians 2:9***

How fitting that this quarter's lessons should finish with the study of the culmination of salvation history – the coming of Christ in glory and the glorious certainty of our eternal destiny. This is the sure and certain hope of the Christian based on the promise of Christ Himself: 'I will come again' John 14:3. We know where Christ has gone and we know the way to our heavenly home, for Christ Himself is the Way (John 14:4-6).

To the Seventh Day Adventist Christian, this is nothing new, for he lives life in the context of the 'comings' or 'advents' of God. God has come to this earth as Creator, as Redeemer and He is coming again as King. His resurrection is the guarantee that all who are found in Him will live eternally.

He is the Alpha and Omega; in Him is found our beginning and when we give our lives to Him, He will be the author and finisher of our faith; our eternal destiny is secure in His hands.

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed (past historic tense) from death into life." John 5:24*

*For you died (past historic tense), and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:3, 4*

### **The Fate of the Dead: Dependent on Choices made in Life**

Since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, we all suffer the consequences of sin – sickness, sorrow and the first death. But the wages of sin for all mankind is eternal death.

But God planned mankind's redemption before the foundation of the world. His Son, Christ Jesus would redeem all mankind and pay the penalty of sin for all.

All who believe the good news of the gospel and make Jesus their personal Saviour and Lord will escape the condemnation to eternal death. Those who refuse to believe will bear their own condemnation.

*For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22*

***"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." John 5:24-29***

*"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:18*

### **A New Existence**

The glories that await those redeemed from the earth cannot be exaggerated. First, there is the absence of pain in all its forms: no crying, no sorrow, no death (Rev. 21:4). There will be no future source of sorrow, because He who sits on the throne says, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). Sin is the root of suffering, and every part of it is

kept out of the precinct of the redeemed (Rev. 21:8). Second, all our past sufferings are consoled, since God Himself will have “wiped away all tears from our eyes” (Rev. 21:4). We will be “kings and priests unto God” (Rev. 1:6) with the undeserved and staggering privilege of sitting with Him on His throne (Rev. 3:21). One can only imagine the heights of worship and praise that will flow uncontrollably from hearts overflowing with gratitude for what God and the Lamb have done for us.’

*And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. Revelation 22:3-5*

### **Then Shall We Know**

*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 1 Corinthians 13:12*

Though we marvel at the workings of nature and see the hand of the Creator in the laws that govern nature, we are unable to fully comprehend God’s design laws for nature and for mankind. But in heaven, we will be able to fully see and understand God’s work in nature and the universe; His work in Time – the history of mankind and salvation history.

‘There, when the veil that darkens our vision shall be removed, and our eyes shall behold that world of beauty of which we now catch glimpses through the microscope; when we look on the glories of the heavens, now scanned afar through the telescope; when, the blight of sin removed, the whole earth shall appear in “the beauty of the Lord our God,” what a field will be open to our study! There the student of science may read the records of creation and discern no reminders of the law of evil. He may listen to the music of nature’s voices and detect no note of wailing or undertone of sorrow. In all created things he may trace one handwriting—in the vast universe behold “God’s name writ large,” and not in earth or sea or sky one sign of ill remaining... There will be open to the student, history of infinite scope and of wealth inexpressible. Here, from the vantage ground of God’s word, the student is afforded a view of the vast field of history and may gain some knowledge of the principles that govern the course of human events. But his vision is still clouded, and his knowledge incomplete. Not until he stands in the light of eternity will he see all things clearly.’ *Education p 303*

### **The School of the Hereafter**

*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:17-19*

Even though we trust God unconditionally, there are questions and issues that are not understood clearly here on earth. The Christian who truly understands God’s unconditional love for him will trust Him for His grace, when the circumstances of life are unfavourable.

In heaven, we will finally understand the mystery of iniquity and the mystery of godliness; the origin of evil, the purpose of suffering and many things we find hard to bear in this world of sin and sorrow. Even God’s love is seen by us ‘as through a glass, darkly...’ but then we will know and understand what Paul describes as the love that passes knowledge (Ephesians 3:19).

‘Then will be opened before him the course of the great conflict that had its birth before time began, and that ends only when time shall cease. The history of the inception of sin; of fatal falsehood in its crooked working; of truth that, swerving not from its own straight lines, has met and conquered error—all will be made manifest. The veil that interposes between the visible and the invisible world will be drawn aside, and wonderful things will be revealed.

Not until the providences of God are seen in the light of eternity shall we understand what we owe to the care and interposition of His angels. Celestial beings have taken an active part in the affairs of men. They have appeared in garments that shone as the lightning; they have come as men, in the garb of wayfarers. They have accepted the

hospitalities of human homes; they have acted as guides to benighted travellers. They have thwarted the spoiler's purpose and turned aside the stroke of the destroyer.' *Education p 304*

### **Our Great Teacher**

Christ, who is the Word (the Logos) of God, will continue to be our Teacher in eternity.

Above all, He will tell us the story of our redemption.

When He is asked, *'What are these wounds between your hands?'* Then he will answer, *'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends'* Zechariah 13:6. Because He is the Friend of sinners, He came down to earth and redeemed His friends at the cost of His very life. In response to His great love, we will follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

'There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known. The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together "the whole family in heaven and earth" (Ephesians 3:15)—these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed.

There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed.' *The Great Controversy: p 677*

*"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."* Revelation 7:14-17

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