

# ***Sabbath School Today*** **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

## ***Preparation for the End Time*** **Lesson 8. Worship the Creator**

Many Christians are suspicious of the idea of “present truth.” The Seventh-day Adventist Church embraces the concept, since its most unique doctrine of the cleansing of the sanctuary is based on the book of Daniel, a book that was closed until the end time.

Ellen White taught it clearly, and connects it with the message given to the “messengers” God raised up, specifically, E. J. Waggoner. “Questions were asked at that time. ‘Sister White, do you think that the Lord has any new and increased light for us as a people?’ I answered, ‘Most assuredly. I do not only think so, I but can speak understandingly. I know that there is precious truth to be unfolded to us if we are the people that are to stand in the day of God’s preparation.’ Then the question was asked whether I thought the matter better drop where it was, after Brother Waggoner had stated his views of the law in Galatians. I said, ‘By no means.’” [1]

“Elder E. J. Waggoner had the privilege granted him of speaking plainly and presenting his views upon justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law. This was no new light, but it was *old light placed where it should be* in the third angel’s message. What is the burden of that message? John sees a people. He says, ‘Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus’ (Rev. 14:12). This people John beholds just before he sees the Son of man ‘having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle’ (verse 14).” [2]

God is the same yesterday and forever and His word tells us all we need to know about Him, but seeing what has always been in His word gives new meaning to “old” light. The message of the third angel of Revelation 14 has been here from centuries ago, but God found it necessary to make a clearer connection to the concept of righteousness by faith through the message given in 1888. “Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, and I have answered, ‘it is the third angel’s message in verity.’” [3]

The fact that the messages of the angels in both Revelation 14 and 18 are in a loud voice, suggests the universality of their relevance to all humanity. That relevance is based on the fact that all humanity has sinned in our original ancestor, Adam. There are those who resist the idea that we are all in this sinful condition without having had any choice or say in the matter ourselves, forgetting that they not only inherited a self-centered nature, but have confirmed it by personal acts of sin.

Ellet J. Waggoner gives this perspective: “What would you think of a man drowning in the ocean, who, when someone throws him a rope, looks at it, and then says: ‘I know that I am drowning, and that the only hope I have lies in my getting hold of that rope; but I will not take hold of it unless I know that it has really been my own fault that I fell into the water. If it was my own fault, then I will take it, because I am the only one who is to blame for my being in this condition. But if, on the other hand, someone pushed me into the water, and I could not help myself, then I will have nothing to do with that rope.’ Such a man would be considered devoid of common sense. Then, acknowledging that we are sinners and in a lost condition, let us take hold of the salvation that is [given] to us.” [4]

Since the sin problem is a universal one, the solution worked out by the Godhead needed to be universal. Even though with perfect foreknowledge they knew many would spurn the gift, Jesus was begotten of the Father in human flesh as the second Adam (Romans 5). On Him was laid “the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). When the books are opened in the final judgment, no one will be able to say that God did not pay for his or her sins.

Many people fear the judgment of God, and well they should if they believe it is done by an impassive, disinterested being who arbitrarily wants to see how many people He can keep out of heaven. They imagine Him like some evil Santa Claus who is keeping His “naughty or nice” list. Yet, we know that God is love, and the Bible describes love as “love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered” [some versions translate this as “*it keeps no record of wrongs*”] (1 Cor. 13:4-5, *New American Standard Bible*). If love does not keep a record of wrongs, why does the Bible speak of record books in heaven where God blots out our sin?

The seeming contradiction is easily resolved. God does keep a record, but not against us, but to explain His actions. The plan of salvation brought justification, or a “verdict of acquittal” for every human that has ever lived on this earth, but we are not forced to accept that verdict. When the “hour of His judgment” comes, God needs records to show that He provided a fair opportunity to every human being to make a choice. Throughout our lifetime, God has brought circumstances which cause us to come to a decision for or against the grace of God. The “evidence” for justification in our case is not our own obedience, but Christ’s total identity with us as our second Adam and our sacrifice. He died for every one, accepts every one, and treats them generously as though they were forgiven. God is already reconciled to us (see, for example, Gal 2:16-21).

Only the work of the Creator God through the agency of His Holy Spirit can make this reconciliation a reality in our hearts and minds. The Bible presents a message that must lighten the earth with glory. It meets and complements the heart-longings of all who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who are now scattered throughout Babylon, awaiting the final call to come out of it. Righteousness by faith in this time of the

cleansing of the sanctuary does more than prepare people to die “in the Lord.” It makes possible a ripening of the harvest that prepares them for the sickle when the divine Farmer is told to “thrust in Thy sickle, and reap” (Rev. 14:13-16).

The process of coming out of Babylon involves putting away sin, which requires cooperation with the Holy Spirit. “The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God.” [5]

Praise God for such a blessed promise!

—Arlene Hill

#### **Endnotes:**

[1] *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 219.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 211, emphasis added.

[3] Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, “Repentance the Gift of God,” April 1, 1890.

[4] Ellet J. Waggoner, *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, “Bible Study: Letter to the Romans—No. 9,” March 17, 1891, p. 137.

[5] Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 98, 99.

#### **Notes:**

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/MQfrnUDrn18>

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