

Third Quarter 2008

Adult Sabbath School Lessons

Special Insights No. 3

(Produced by the Editorial Board of the 1888 Message Study Committee)

John the Baptist: Preparing the Way for Jesus

Preparing the Way for Jesus: The lesson's author has selected a Scripture of warning for us, which speaks as to why we as a people have been experiencing a delay in the return of Jesus. Colossians 2:8: "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the base principles of the world, and not according to Christ."

It is clear that Paul is concerned about what the Colossians believed, because what one believes makes all the difference in the world!

Starts with a Special Calling: God called this Church and gave it a distinct and special message, Revelation 14:6-12, to prepare the way for Jesus to return. This message was to be proclaimed in the Spirit of Elijah and was to be seen demonstrated in the lives of the entire congregation. In the beginning, study was prayerfully given to seek what the Scriptures taught so as not to be deceived by tradition or the philosophy of men. God in His great mercy gave the Spirit of Prophecy to the Church to guide and to protect it.

Soon it was discovered that we were the Laodicean church and God had addressed a special message to the leaders of this church so that they might encourage the congregation to stay focused while giving the three angels' messages to the world. God well understood the need for His chosen leaders to be "hot," for then the people would also be hot and if the leaders became "lukewarm" the entire church would become lukewarm. There is always a direct cause and effect.

The Holy Spirit Prepares Us: 1 Corinthians 3:16: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you?" The Spirit of God brings all of Christ in His fullness to each believer and Christ then dwells in the soul temple by the Holy Spirit. This was declared to be "the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:26, 27).

This glory we know to be the character of Christ (see John 17:17-24). "To be a Christian is to be a follower of Christ. The Christian is one in whom the life and character of Christ are reproduced." (E. J. Waggoner, *The Present Truth*: Sept. 5, 1895).

Ellen White is also clear: "It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said he would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. That is, the character of the one who thus beholds Christ is so like his, that one looking at his sees Christ's own character shining out as from a mirror" (*Review and Herald*, April 28, 1891).

Our Changed Life and Behavior: It is a historical fact that in 1844 Christ entered upon His work in the Most Holy place as our High Priest (see Heb. 8th 1, 2). We call this work the cleansing of the sanctuary, when the High Priest cleans the sanctuary prior to His returning to earth as King.

In order to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary, the sins of His people must be stopped at their source. Colossians 1:26, 27 states that it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." The mystery then becomes how Christ, our Great High Priest, is in us, cleansing

us, the temple of God (see 1 Cor. 3:16).

Waggoner states: "We have seen that Christ, the Word who is God, is inseparable from the written Word. If we believe the Scriptures, Christ dwells in the heart by faith. The mystery of God made flesh is to be repeated in us. "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27), is the mystery of the Gospel." (*The Present Truth*, Dec. 19, 1895)[see note below]

The Elijah Message and the Return of Jesus: In 1888 God, in His great mercy, gave a clear message directly from His throne through the Holy Spirit, through Waggoner and Jones, to the General Conference in session in Minneapolis. This message was to finish the work of the gospel by preparing a people to be ready to welcome His return!

Regarding the mystery wherein Christ our High Priest is cleansing our sanctuary, John the revelator writes, "In the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets" (Rev.10:7). The hearts of God's people will be cleansed *BEFORE* Christ's second coming, in other words, in the work of cleansing the sanctuary.

God will have a people prepared to stand without a Mediator prior to the close of probation. A mediator is only needed where sin is found. These people are ready because they have kept pace with advancing light—allowing self to be crucified with Christ and by allowing Him to cleanse them by stopping sin at its source.

About the Traditions of Men: It is a popular tradition to teach contrary to the revelations of the Spirit of Prophecy, that the 1888 message, sent by God, was already accepted. This is empty deceit, according to the traditions of man, and not according to Christ.

Many thanks to the author of this lesson for warning us of the danger by pointing us to the Scripture: "Beware lest anyone cheat you through ... empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, ... and not according to Christ" (Col. 2:8).

—Daniel Peters

NOTE:

To read Waggoner's complete article, "[The Word Made Flesh](#)," or download it in [PDF format](#).

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