The Two Witnesses

Lesson 6, 2nd Quarter May 4, to 2nd May 10, 2014

Sabbath Afternoon, May 4

Memory Text:

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Kjv — Isaiah 40:8

"I was shown a time when Satan especially triumphed. Multitudes were gathered in a large room, and were listening to a man who was perverting the purity of their religion. The Bible was hated, and efforts were made to stir the earth of it. The people were forbidden to read it, on pain of death, and all the copies which could be found were burned. But I saw that God had a special care for his Word, He protected it. At different periods there was but a very few copies of the Bible in existence, yet it was not destroyed. The Word of God had fallen, but for in the last days copies of it were to be multiplied that every living soul possess it. I saw that when there were but few copies of the Bible, it was guarded by angels of God. Wicked men and women, who were in high places, and who were in possession of the Word, were blind to it, and they knew not that they had read and understood it. I saw that God, with his Son Jesus, and with his disciples, had been in the Bible, and that it was their mind. I saw that the Bible, as it now stands, was given by inspiration of God, to the sake, or to the guidance of the children." EW 214.2

Sunday, May 5

Two Witnesses

Read Revelation 11:3-6, 14. Be identifying features of the two witnesses you discover in this passage?

"Concerning the two witnesses the prophet declares further: "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." "Thy word," said the psalmist, "is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Christ, the Word, is the light of the world. The Scriptures were given through the inspiration of God, and they are a light shining in a dark place, pointing to the origin and perpetuity of the law of God. Both are witnesses also to the plan of salvation. The two olive trees of which the prophet speaks are those of prophecy, pointed forward to a Saviour to come. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament are the light of the world, revealing the character and the mission of the Saviour, and showing the way of life.

"They shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed upon with sackcloth." Throughout the period of the dark ages the witnesses prophesied in a state of obscurity. The papal power sought to hide from the people the light of the law of God, and the light of the gospel of salvation by faith in Christ. See Appendix.Where the Bible was proscribed by religious and secular authorities, the witnesses were clothed in sackcloth. Those who had the Word in their possession were obliged to turn from it to the teachings of men. Those who dared proclaim its sacred truths were hunted, betrayed, tortured, buried alive, or burned at the stake as heretics. The faithful witnesses, clothed in sackcloth, testified against the corruptions of the church and the earth—then the faithful witnesses, clothed in sackcloth, prophesied a thousand two hundred and three-score days, the full period of 1260 years, during which the papal power was permitted to wear out God's saint and were pasture for His horse." In these Inspired sermons were given warning to the people of the world of the coming of the Lord, the whole of this time. GC 267.2

"Wherever they were found, even in the procession out of their mouth, and devouredh their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed." Revelation 11:5. Those who would oppose the work of God, and would hinder the proclamation of the prophecies, would be destroyed. Both in the closing chapter of the Revelation "I testify unto every man that hearth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of this book of the prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Revelation 22:18, 19. GC 268.1

"Such are the warnings which God has given to guard men against changing or disregarding the law of God. The prophecies concerning the last warnings, denunciations apply to all who by their influence lead men to regard lightly the law of God. They should cause those to fear and tremble who flagrantly violate the law of God, and who teach others to do so. The prophecies which relate to the last warnings to be given to the inhabitants of the world, are of the most solemn character. God has entrusted to world-ruling powers the work of warning the world of the coming of Christ. Their own conscience, which should be their monitor, they have made subservient to their own purposes. Upon them is a fearful responsibility. The written word, the law of God, will measure the character of every man and condemn all whom this warning has shall disclose warning." GC 268.2

Monday, May 6

Prophetic time periods

Read Revelation 11:3 and Revelation 12:5, 6, 14. 15 with Daniel 7:25. Identify the three prophetic time periods in these passages.

"The periods here mentioned—"forty and two months," and "a thousand two hundred and three-score days," are the same period of time, the period during which the church of Christ was to suffer oppression from Rome. The 1260 years of papal supremacy began in 538 A.D. and ended in the year 1798. Some years before the close of this period, in the year 1844, a French army entered the city of Rome, and the papal power received a deadly wound, in fulfillment of the prophecy, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." Revelation 13:10. "The dragon had power to the beast, the power, the throne, and great authority." Revelation 13:2. And the prophecy of Daniel, of the papal oppression, "Verily as I thought, so it came to pass; and I kept it in my heart." "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Revelation 12:6, 14. Daniel 7:25. The influence of the papal power was shortened, through the agency of the French, in 1798." GC 266.4

"In the sixth century the Papal hierarchy became firmly established. In seat of imperial power, the city of the Caesars, the throne of the dragon was established, and the head and heart of the papal church. Paganism had given place to the Papacy. The dragon had given to the beast "his power, his throne, and great authority." Revelation 13:2. And now the prophecy of 1260 years of oppression commenced. In the persecutions of the Dark and Middle Ages, the church of Christ was compelled to flee into the wilderness, and for a time her place was filled by a spiritual Babylon, ravaging and accepting the power and sovereignty, or, in a sense, away from lives in dungeons cells, or suffer death by the rack, the flame, or the scaffold. Prisons were filled, dungeons were crowded, and the best and noblest were by parents and brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake." Luke 21:16, 17. Scaffolds and stakes were erected, and the blood of martyrs was poured out as the world became a vast battlefield. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found her place of refuge in the wilderness. Her life was hidden with God in Christ. Her members were driven into wilderness, and were prepared by God, that they should feed for them one thousand two hundred and three-score days." Revelation 12:6." SR 97.2

Tuesday, May 7

The Two Witnesses Killed

Read Revelation 11:7-9. Remembering that the language is symbolic, what does this prophecy tell us about the fate of the witnesses, the Bible and New Testament?

"When they shall have finished (yes finishing) their testimony." The period when the two witnesses were to prophesy clothed in sackcloth, ended in 1798. At that time the papal power, which had been weakened by the French army, was to be wasted away by the spirit of life from God, and "shall kill them that be ascendeth out of the bottomless pit." In many of the nations of Europe the powers that ruled the church were to be overthrown, and the papal power, which Satan through the medium of the papacy. But here is brought to view a new manifestation of Satan's power." GC 268.3

"It had been Rome's policy, under a profession of reverence for the Bible, to keep it from the people, and to substitute for its teachings the traditions of the church. Her aim was to become the world's teacher. Her traditions were most boldly exalted the existence of the living God and restored his worship in place of the worship of the papal church, which had for centuries exalted against the authority of heaven and the law of God." Where the Bible was proscribed by secular and religious authorities, the witnesses were clothed in sackcloth." Satan through the medium of the papacy. But here is brought to view a new manifestation of Satan's power." GC 268.3

"The great city" in whose streets the witnesses are slain, and where their dead bodies lie, is "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt." Jerusalem was the place in which most boldly denied the existence of the living God and restored his worship in place of the worship of the papal church, which had for centuries exalted against the authority of heaven and the law of God." Where the Bible was proscribed by secular and religious authorities, the witnesses were clothed in sackcloth." Satan through the medium of the papacy. But here is brought to view a new manifestation of Satan's power." GC 268.3

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