

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

Health and Healing

Lesson 1: “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow!”

Introduction to this Quarter’s Topic

Health reform is “the right arm” of the third angel’s message. The third angel’s message is the cleansing of the sanctuary, which parallels the cleansing of the lives of God’s people. It is to prepare a people for translation at the second coming of Jesus. Health reform is an essential part of the “fast” which God has appointed for His people in our Day of Atonement. Inherent within health reform is the principle of self-denial—the principle of the cross. Health reform is not a theme of the 1888 message, which is a deeper appreciation of the love of God. It supplies the motivation for the third angel’s message of which health reform is a part. There is no end to the amount of “good works” of health reform when faith is motivated by *agape*.

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise is the worship of God with the whole being. Praise is the vital key in the plan of salvation. Praise will win the victory for God in the great controversy with Satan over the truth.

When we think of salvation it is usually in individual terms. How can *I* be saved? Through the 1888 message God is moving us beyond the egocentric concern for our own personal salvation to see that God is on trial before the universe because of Satan’s accusations against Him. If God should prematurely force His way upon the cosmos before winning the allegiance of man by His *agape*, then Satan will argue before intelligent beings of the universe that he has been right all along that God’s law is arbitrary, dictatorial, and should be abolished so that creatures may have the freedom to rule themselves individually.

It is through the praise of all His creation, beginning with man, that God intends to win His case. God’s promise in the everlasting covenant, of the forgiveness of sins and the restoration of spontaneous obedience to God’s laws in man, evokes a thankful response of praise, “Amen!” This is the way Abraham responded to God’s covenant. “And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6).

Satan could formulate all the inventive, convoluted arguments possible against God and Abraham, but simple faith—thankfulness—in God’s promise is an argument for the truth against which Satan has no retort.

Praise is a persuasive argument in the face of resistance to God’s truth. Babies vindicate God by their praise. “LORD our sovereign, how glorious is your name

throughout the world! Your majesty is praised as high as the heavens, from the mouths of babes and infants at the breast. You have established a bulwark against your adversaries to restrain the enemy and the avenger” (Psalm 8:1, 2, *Revised English Bible*). After their regular feeding, babies coo as an expression of thankfulness to their Benefactor. No way can Satan steal the attention of onlookers from a precious baby, by his devious arguments against God.

At His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the children sang, “Hosanna to the Son of David.” Jesus said, “Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?” (Matt. 21:16). All the arguments of the priests and rulers against Jesus being David’s Son, to the contrary, on that day the children’s simple praise vindicated their King.

Who can argue against praise? “Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! ... Let them exalt Him also in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the assembly of the elders” (Psalm 107:15, 32). Surely “His wonderful works” include the air that we breathe and the light which brings life, which He so freely and abundantly supplies, and without which we would all be dead.

Who should praise? “Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord” (Psalm 150:6). Why did God breathe into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life? It is for man to use this gift in praising God. Not only man, but all living creatures give praise to the Lord. The whole human organism benefits from the breath of life which God supplies freely to all His creatures. Not alone should our tongues give praise to God, but every dimension of our physical, spiritual, and social life is to be used for the praise of God. The plan of salvation contemplates the restoration of the whole person in harmony with God’s will.

The heathen, the most wicked, are compelled to praise the Lord. “O praise Jehovah, all ye heathen, laud Him all ye nations! For His goodness rules powerfully over us, and Jehovah’s faithfulness is ever-enduring! *Hallelujah*” (Psalm 117). [1] By worshipping the Lord with praise the heathen would cease being wicked.

What must I do in order to be saved? *Appreciate* what it cost the Savior to die for me on the cross. This opens the door for the Lord to show His salvation in the life. “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me, and prepareth a way that I may show him the salvation of God” (Psalm 50:23, *Revised Version*). A daily appreciation of the cross of Christ is an offering of praise and worship never ceasing. “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:6). Such a person will not choose sin. It is living in the light of His love which is commandment-keeping. With the *agape* motivation there is no legalism.

Does God need us in the great controversy between Christ and Satan? Absolutely! How else can He win His trial?

If God could have won His case without us, He would have forced the final solution upon everyone and wiped out His enemies a long time ago. Satan anticipated He would do this at the first coming of Jesus. [2] But we are not Calvinists whose sovereign God imposes His decrees upon people whether they want it or not.

If God should send Christ to translate a people whose hearts are still alienated from Him because of unbelief manifested by their selfish motivations, then Satan can rightly claim they are no better than the vast numbers of Christians who line up in favor of the mark of the beast issue. And, if Christ resurrects the dead; and, at the same time, arbitrarily destroys those who worship the beast, Satan will forcefully argue the unfairness of God before the onlooking intelligences. Might does not make right. Only right is might. God will win His case on the praises of His people!

—Paul E. Penno

Endnotes:

[1] Horace Howard Furness, *Book of Psalms: A New English Translation* (Dodd, Mead, and Co., New York, 1898), p. 127.

[2] The following statement speaks primarily of the first advent of Christ with its contingencies, but certain principles are implicit relative to the second: “The unfallen worlds watched with intense interest to see Jehovah arise and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth, and Satan boasted that if God did do this, he would complete his plans and secure for himself the allegiance of the unfallen worlds. He had arguments ready by which to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above.” Ellen G. White, “God’s Love Unmeasured,” *Signs of the Times*, May 21, 1912, p. 11. Also, *Signs of the Times*, Feb. 5, 1894, p. 3.