**SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON**

**2024 QUARTER 2**

**LESSON 3- LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS**

**MEMORY TEXT:**

**“Then Jesus said to them, ‘A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going’ ” (John 12:35).**

**SABBATH AFTERNOON & SUNDAY 7 IMPORTANT POINTS**

**SUNDAY TITLE: Compromise: Satan’s Subtle Strategy**

1. **Satan's Deceptive Tactics**: Satan is portrayed as a dragon and a serpent in Revelation, symbolizing his desire to destroy God's people and his cunning use of lies to deceive them (Revelation 12:9).
2. **Early Christian Persecution**: Despite facing persecution from imperial Rome, many early Christians remained faithful to God, and the gospel continued to spread, leading to the growth of the church (Acts 20:27-32).
3. **Change in Satan's Strategy**: Satan shifted his strategy over time, moving from direct persecution to subtle compromise. Many pagans were baptized without proper instruction in biblical truth, leading to the infiltration of error into the church (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12).
4. **Era of Compromise**: The fourth and fifth centuries saw a significant compromise within the church, as leaders merged biblical truths with pagan practices, leading to a distortion of Christian teachings (Proverbs 16:25).
5. **God's Presence in Adversity**: Throughout history, even in the face of persecution and compromise, God remained with His people. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, they stood firm in their convictions and remained loyal to God's Word (2 Corinthians 4:3-6).
6. **Importance of Scripture**: The Scriptures are essential for discerning Satan's deceptions and withstanding his attacks. Jesus Himself used the Word to resist Satan's temptations, highlighting its central role in combating falsehood (Psalms 119:105).
7. **Contemporary Challenges**: Today, Satan continues to distort and misinterpret God's Word to deceive people. Various means, such as false teachings, misquotations of Scripture, and suppression of biblical truths, are used to undermine confidence in God's Word (Psalms 119:130).

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. **Question**: Compare Jesus' character with Satan's based on John 14:6 and John 8:44. What contrasts do you observe?

**Answer**: Jesus is depicted as the embodiment of truth in John 14:6, whereas Satan is described as the father of lies in John 8:44. This highlights the fundamental opposition between the nature of Jesus, who represents truth, and Satan, who embodies deceit and falsehood.

1. **Question**: What central message do Proverbs 23:23, John 17:17, and John 8:32 convey regarding the truth of God's Word?

**Answer**: These passages emphasize the importance and centrality of God's Word as truth. They highlight that knowing the truth sets one free, sanctifies believers, and is essential for discerning and resisting Satan's deceptions.

1. **Question**: In what ways does Satan attempt to distort or misinterpret God's Word today?

**Answer**: Satan employs various tactics to distort God's Word today, such as promoting false doctrines, misquoting Scripture to suit his agenda, and fostering confusion and doubt regarding biblical truths through secular ideologies and cultural influences.

1. **Question**: How can believers remain grounded in the truth of God's Word amidst contemporary challenges and deceptive tactics?

**Answer**: Believers can remain grounded in the truth by diligently studying Scripture, cultivating a deep relationship with God through prayer and fellowship, seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit, and comparing teachings with the consistent message of the Bible. Additionally, being discerning and critical of sources claiming to represent biblical truth is essential in avoiding deception.

**MONDAY 4 IMPORTANT POINTS**

**TITLE: Savage Wolves**

1. **Warning of Apostasy**: The apostle Paul warned the church leaders from Ephesus about the coming apostasy, emphasizing the infiltration of "savage wolves" who would not spare the flock (Acts 20:27-29).
2. **Internal Persecution**: Paul expressed concern that false teachers would arise from within the church, speaking perverse things and leading disciples astray (Acts 20:30).
3. **Characteristics of Apostasy**: Paul described the coming apostasy as the "mystery of lawlessness" already at work, with a gradual departure from the truth of God's Word regarding obedience to His law (2 Thessalonians 2:7).
4. **Compromises in Church**: Over time, compromises such as the introduction of idols into Christian worship and the adoption of pagan practices like Sunday worship emerged, leading to a departure from biblical truths (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12).

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. **Question**: According to Acts 20:29, what was Paul's warning to the church leaders regarding the coming apostasy? How does this warning resonate with the challenges faced by the church today?

**Answer**: Paul warned about the infiltration of "savage wolves" into the church, indicating fierce persecution from within. This resonates with challenges today, where false teachings and internal strife can threaten the unity and purity of the church.

1. **Question**: In 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12, what characteristics of apostasy does Paul describe? How do these characteristics manifest in contemporary contexts?

**Answer**: Paul highlights the gradual departure from the truth of God's Word and the introduction of false doctrines and pagan practices. These characteristics manifest today through compromises in doctrine, syncretism with secular ideologies, and the watering down of biblical truths to accommodate cultural norms.

1. **Question**: Reflecting on the compromises mentioned in the lesson, what compromises do we observe entering the church today? How can believers guard against making such compromises in their own lives?

**Answer**: Compromises today may include prioritizing cultural relevance over biblical fidelity, condoning sinful behaviors for the sake of acceptance, and diluting the gospel message to avoid offense. Believers can guard against making such compromises by diligently studying Scripture, holding fast to biblical truth, seeking accountability within the church community, and relying on the Holy Spirit for discernment and conviction.

**TUESDAY- 4 IMPORTANT POINTS**

**TITLE:** **Safeguarded by the Word**

1. **The Bible as Divine Revelation**: The Bible is presented as the infallible revelation of God's will, containing Heaven's plan for humanity's salvation (2 Timothy 3:16).
2. **Protection from Deception**: Both Jesus and the apostle Paul emphasize the role of Scripture in protecting believers from the deceptions of Satan (John 17:15-17; Acts 20:32).
3. **Crucial Truths Revealed**: The Bible reveals crucial truths about the plan of salvation, the life and ministry of Jesus, His sacrifice, resurrection, intercession, and return (John 17:15-17; Acts 20:32).
4. **The Authority of God's Word**: The Word of God must be accepted as the ultimate standard for understanding sacred truth, and believers must fight against attempts to undermine its authority or inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16).

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. **Question**: According to John 17:15-17 and Acts 20:32, how does Jesus and Paul highlight the role of Scripture in protecting believers from deception? How can we practically apply this principle in our lives today?

**Answer**: Both Jesus and Paul emphasize the sanctifying power of truth found in God's Word. By grounding ourselves in Scripture, we are equipped to discern and resist the deceptions of Satan. Practically, we can apply this principle by prioritizing regular study and meditation on Scripture, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and comparing teachings and beliefs against the consistent message of the Bible.

1. **Question**: In Psalms 119:105, 116, 130, 133, and 160, what insights does the psalmist provide regarding the significance of God's Word in the plan of salvation?

**Answer**: The psalmist highlights the Word of God as a guiding light (verse 105), a source of hope and refuge (verse 116), a revealer of divine truths (verse 130), a source of direction and wisdom (verse 133), and a testimony of God's enduring faithfulness and truth (verse 160). These insights underscore the indispensable role of Scripture in understanding and experiencing the fullness of God's salvation.

1. **Question**: How can believers guard against subtle attempts to undermine the authority or inspiration of Scripture, as mentioned in the lesson?

**Answer**: Believers can guard against such attempts by cultivating a deep reverence for the Word of God, critically evaluating teachings in light of Scripture, being wary of interpretations that prioritize human understanding over divine revelation, and engaging in continuous study and reflection on the entirety of God's Word. Additionally, seeking guidance from trusted spiritual leaders and engaging in respectful dialogue with those who hold differing views can help reinforce one's commitment to the authority and inspiration of Scripture.

**WEDNESDAY- 4 IMPORTANT POINTS**

**TITLE:** **Human Reasoning Apart From Scripture**

1. **Limitations of Human Reasoning**: Human reasoning, unaided by the Holy Spirit and uninformed by the Word of God, is incapable of discovering divine truths (Proverbs 16:25).
2. **Satan's Deceptive Strategy**: Satan's strategy of deception often involves leading individuals to rely solely on their own understanding, which may seem right but can ultimately lead to error (Judges 21:25).
3. **Guidance Through Scripture**: The Holy Spirit guides believers to the truths revealed in Scripture, serving as a reliable compass on their journey from earth to heaven (Isaiah 53:6).
4. **The Importance of Divine Revelation**: Divine revelation through Scripture is essential for discerning truth and morality, as it provides a reliable standard against which all human reasoning must be measured.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. **Question**: Why is the human mind, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, incapable of discovering divine truth?

**Answer**: The human mind, without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is limited by its finite understanding and prone to biases and errors. Divine truth transcends human comprehension and can only be fully understood through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, who reveals the deeper spiritual realities contained in Scripture.

1. **Question**: Discuss the relationship between human reason and divine revelation. How does reason actually help us understand divine revelation?

**Answer**: Human reason can serve as a tool to analyze and comprehend the truths revealed in divine revelation. While reason alone may fall short in apprehending spiritual realities, it can help individuals grasp the logical coherence and rationality of divine truths. Reason can also aid in interpreting prophecy, such as in Daniel 2, by discerning patterns and connections in historical events that align with the prophetic message.

1. **Question**: How does a prophecy like Daniel 2, which covers world history from the time of Babylon to the Second Coming, powerfully appeal to human reason?

**Answer**: Prophecies like Daniel 2 appeal to human reason by presenting a coherent narrative of historical events that align with the prophetic timeline. By tracing the rise and fall of empires and the fulfillment of specific prophecies, individuals can discern the reliability and trustworthiness of divine revelation. The fulfillment of such prophecies serves as tangible evidence of God's sovereignty over history and His faithfulness to His Word.

**THURSDAY- 4 IMPORTANT POINTS**

**TITLE:** Battle for the Mind

1. **Satan's Blinding Influence**: Satan, referred to as the god of this age, blinds the minds of unbelievers, preventing them from understanding the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).
2. **Means of Blinding Minds**: Satan accomplishes this by keeping people from the study of God's Word, deranging their mental faculties, distracting them with worldly concerns, and appealing to their pride and self-exaltation (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).
3. **The Role of the Gospel**: The gospel is the means by which Satan's schemes and deceptions are exposed, and through which individuals can transition from darkness to light (2 Corinthians 4:4).
4. **Jesus as the Light**: Jesus is described as the true light who enlightens everyone, shining in the darkness and bringing grace and truth (John 1:4-5, 9, 14).

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. **Question**: What does 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 reveal about Satan's strategy of blinding minds? How does this passage inform our understanding of evangelism and spiritual warfare?

**Answer**: 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 illustrates how Satan works to prevent people from understanding and accepting the gospel. This tells us the importance of not only proclaiming the gospel but also engaging in spiritual warfare through prayer, intercession, and the power of the Holy Spirit to break through spiritual blindness and bring about genuine transformation.

1. **Question**: How do John 1:4-5, 9, and 14 describe Jesus? What significance does Jesus being the light have in the context of spiritual darkness and deception?

**Answer**: These verses portray Jesus as the true light who shines in the darkness, bringing grace and truth to humanity. Jesus' role as the light is significant because it illuminates the darkness of sin and deception, revealing the way to salvation and true understanding. In a world blinded by Satan's lies, Jesus serves as the beacon of hope and the source of enlightenment.

1. **Question**: Reflecting on the early centuries of the Christian church, how did believers demonstrate their commitment to Christ as the light in their darkness? How can contemporary believers emulate their example in confronting spiritual deception?

**Answer**: Early Christians demonstrated their commitment to Christ by standing courageously for His truth, even in the face of persecution and opposition. They relied on the light of the gospel to expose the devil's deceptions and remained steadfast in their loyalty to Christ. Contemporary believers can emulate their example by prioritizing a deep relationship with Christ, immersing themselves in Scripture, and boldly proclaiming the truth of the gospel, even amidst a culture saturated with spiritual darkness and deception.

**FRIDAY- 5 IMPORTANT POINTS**

**TITLE:** **Further Thought**

1. **Continuing Conflict**: Ellen G. White tells us the ongoing battle between truth and error throughout history, emphasizing the need for vigilance and fidelity among God's servants. “The same spirit of hatred and opposition to the truth has inspired the enemies of God in every age, and the same vigilance and fidelity have been required in His servants. The words of Christ to the first disciples are applicable to His followers to the close of time: ‘What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.’ Mark 13:37.” The Great Controversy, pp. 56, 57
2. **Satan's Subtle Attacks**: In regions where the Bible is readily available, Satan employs various means, including scientific and scholarly endeavors, to undermine trust in God's Word.
3. **Misinterpretation of Scripture**: Modern scholarship sometimes seeks to distort biblical truths, such as questioning the dating of books like Daniel, leading to confusion and doubt among believers.
4. **Necessity of Discernment**: Paul's admonition to "test all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21) reminds believers to critically evaluate teachings and interpretations of Scripture.
5. **Safeguards Against Misinterpretation**: Understanding the authority of Scripture, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, comparing interpretations with the consistent message of the Bible, and remaining steadfast in faith are essential safeguards against misinterpreting God's Word.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. **Question**: How is Satan using methods similar to those mentioned in Ellen G. White's quote to undermine the authority of Scripture today? What examples can you identify?

**Answer**: Satan continues to employ various strategies, such as secular ideologies, historical criticism, and skepticism towards biblical narratives, to cast doubt on the reliability and authority of Scripture. For instance, theories like evolution and higher criticism challenge the biblical account of creation and historical events, leading some to question the trustworthiness of the Bible.

1. **Question**: What are our greatest safeguards against misinterpreting God’s Word?

**Answer**: Our greatest safeguards against misinterpretation include understanding the overarching message of Scripture, relying on the Holy Spirit for illumination, adhering to sound principles of biblical interpretation, seeking guidance from trusted spiritual mentors, and engaging in prayerful study of the Word.

1. **Question**: How does Satan attempt to malign God’s character and present Him as an authoritarian, unloving tyrant? What is God’s response to these lies?

**Answer**: Satan distorts God's character by portraying Him as harsh, arbitrary, and unloving, seeking to undermine trust and intimacy between humanity and God. However, God's response to these lies is revealed through His acts of love, mercy, and grace throughout history, culminating in the ultimate demonstration of His love through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

1. **Question**: How can we ensure that we do not distort the meaning of Scripture to suit our own ends? Why might this be easier to do than we realize?

**Answer**: We can ensure that we do not distort Scripture by approaching it with humility, acknowledging our biases, and seeking to understand it within its original context. It might be easier to distort Scripture unintentionally due to preconceived notions, cultural influences, or personal agendas. Safeguarding against distortion requires diligent study, prayerful reflection, and accountability within the Christian community.

1. **Question**: How can we safeguard ourselves against misinterpreting Scripture and ensure that our understanding aligns with God’s intended meaning?

**Answer**: We can safeguard ourselves by studying Scripture systematically, comparing different translations and interpretations, seeking guidance from reputable scholars and theologians, praying for wisdom and discernment, and remaining open to correction and guidance from the Holy Spirit. Additionally, engaging in discussions and sharing insights within a supportive community of believers can help refine our understanding and interpretation of Scripture.