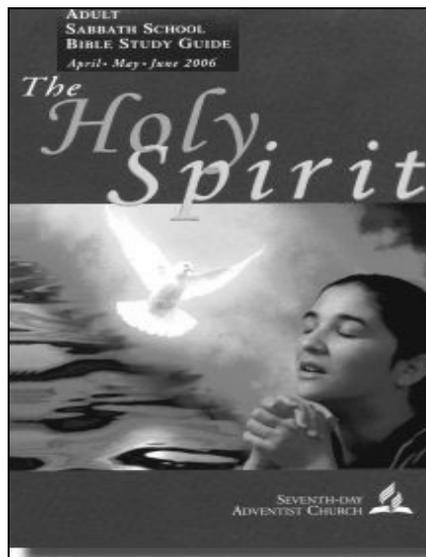


Sabbath School Bible Study Guide, Alternative Commentary



Lesson 8



Sabbath Afternoon

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
Galatians 5:22, 23

The lesson quotes from Scripture and the pen of Ellen White stating “the impossibility of fallen man meriting anything by his own best good works. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone.”
{FW 18.1}

The lesson then correctly states the evidence in the life that reveals faith in Jesus Christ.

“Yet, no Christian who enjoys the promises of salvation through Jesus can live without bearing the fruit of the Spirit ... We can profess all the sacred truths in heaven and earth, but the best evidence that we are in Christ is the fruit we bear.”

This is exactly what Paul is saying in Galatians chapter Five. He outlines “*the works of the flesh*” vs 19-21 and then contrasts them with the fruit of the Spirit vs 22-23.

And as the lesson points out this is the evidence of salvation through Jesus Christ.

“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” Galatians 5:5, 6

In vs 5 we read righteousness by faith comes from the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. This means being “*in Jesus Christ*” vs 6. And this righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ is motivated “*by love*” vs 6

The churches in Galatia had started to lose sight of this sacred life changing truth, and were in danger of being “*entangled again with the yoke of bondage*” vs 1.

Thus Paul is writing to call them back to “*the gospel of Christ*” and the fruit of the true gospel, would be manifest in the life.

Sunday's Lesson

Love

We established in yesterday's lesson, righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ, is motivated by love Galatians 5:5, 6.

Sunday's lesson begins with Romans 5:5

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”
Romans 5:5

This beautiful text tells us what love we need, *“The love of God”* Being the love of God, only God can impart this love to us. *“Shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us”*

This text really highlights our fallen condition.

As we contemplate the cross, and consider the price God paid for us in the gift of His only begotten Son. Even as we dwell upon this infinite love, we need a power outside of ourselves in order to respond. We need God's Love (agape) placed in our hearts, and this love is brought to us by the Holy Spirit which God has graciously given us.

Q: From where do we receive the Holy Spirit? And who is the Holy Spirit that brings the love of God?

A: We receive the Holy Spirit from God the Father.

“how much more shall [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” Luke 11:13

Q: But who is the Holy Spirit, the Father gives us? Does he give us another person? As this quarterly study implies, does the Father give us “one of the three” “co-eternal persons” who make “the triune nature of god?” quarterly study guide p-6, 7.

In Romans 5:5 we saw the love of God is shed into our hearts, by the Holy Spirit God has given us.

In Galatians 4:6 we see the Holy Spirit which God has given is “the Spirit of His Son” which is “sent forth” into “our hearts”

Notice these texts side by side

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Romans 5:5
“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Galatians 4:6

Dear friend can you see? The love of God shed aboard in our hearts, is the Spirit of His Son! It’s the character, the life and love of His Son that is shed abroad in our hearts. Jesus is the Son of God, and His love, is “*the love of God.*”

In the lesson study we are given the following illustration.

“A certain type of tree in the temperate zone inevitably and spontaneously produces leaves in the spring as the sap begins its rise in the trunk and reaches out into every branch and twig. In the same way, a Christian filled with the Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit – love.”

Notice how the sap, the life of the tree, is used to illustrate the work of the Spirit in the Christian life.

In the Spirit of Prophecy we have a similar illustration, let us see what the sap represents and from where it comes.

“Abide in Me, and I in you.” Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between

man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character. {DA 676.2}

Notice what the sap is, “The strength and perfection of His own character.” Just as we had noted, the sap, the Holy Spirit which gives spiritual life, is the life of Christ.

Notice how the statement continues.

“The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the uttermost twig. So Christ communicates the current of spiritual strength to every believer.”

Q: And where does this “current of spiritual strength come from?”

A: “So the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Saviour, pervades the soul, renews the motives and affections, and brings even the thoughts into obedience to the will of God, enabling the receiver to bear the precious fruit of holy deeds.” {AA 284.1}

Yes friends “The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him.” {DA 677.1}

Dear reader you cannot understand, nor teach righteousness by faith, if you believe in a “triune nature of God.”

First of all, you deny Jesus is “truly” the Son of God, but a co-eternal person or member of some triune Godhead or trinity.

Consequently you deny the Father also.

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father” 1 John 2:23

And when you deny the Father, scripture records you seek to make him a liar, because you “*believe not the record that God gave of His son.*” 1 John 5:10

You also accept and teach the Holy Spirit is some third co-eternal, co-equal member of this triune Godhead. You again reject clear scripture that states, God sends forth "*the spirit of His son into your hearts.*" Galatians 4:6

How can you have the faith to overcome, when you believe the one who is supposed to comfort and strengthen you, never was tempted as you are? Never walked over the ground you have to each day, never for a moment had to deal with a carnal nature. And yet this person who never had your experience, never was tempted, never had to overcome anything, is supposed to impart to you the victory?

Some people teach, the Holy Spirit is some third member of a godhead, which brings the life of Christ to the soul. This is not only totally unscriptural, but contradicts the plain testimony of scripture, our Lord promised, "*I will come to you,*" "*where two or three are gathered their am I in the midst of them*" "*I am with you always.*"

How can the very life of Christ, sanctify you, how can Jesus impart to you His life, His victory, His Love and peace, when you believe it is someone else?

Christ doesn't need someone else to impart his life and presence in the world. Our Lord exclaimed "*All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.*"

That "*All power*" Christ received is the gift of the spirit for his church. Acts 1:4, 8, AA 38-39

Before receiving the gift of the spirit for his people, our Lord had to fill the terms of the covenant.

- He had to become a man, with a nature like ours.
- He had to live a righteous life through faith in his Father alone.
- He had to offer this righteous, spotless life for our sins and for our Justification
- That He may through His Spirit impart His perfect life to those who accept Him and believe in Him by faith.

So how can someone else who never did any of the above accomplish this?

Notice what Paul declares regarding our Saviour

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”
Hebrews 4:14-16

See how Paul is instilling confidence to the reader, he declares “*let us hold fast our profession*”, “*let us therefore come boldly*,” why? Because our High Priest Jesus the Son of God knows what it is like to be touched with our weakness, for he too was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. And in Him we can receive the help we need.

And it had to be this way, no one else is neither eligible nor fundamentally qualified to do so. Note the next verse.

“For (for this reason) every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.” Hebrews 5:1

Q: Why must the high priest be taken from among men?

A: That he “*can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.*” Hebrews 5:2

Can you see how only Christ can comfort us, and we can have complete assurance and boldness in Him alone.

This is why scripture declares “*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*” 1 Timothy 2:5

Notice again Hebrews 5:1 in order for Jesus to be our High Priest, He had to become a man (taken from among men). That he could be ordained, or appointed to serve God “*for men*” or in man’s behalf.

Q: How does the High Priest serve God on man’s behalf?

A: “*that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*” Hebrews 5:1

Keep in mind this text is not referring primarily to the cross where Christ offered Himself, but to the gifts and sacrifices that offering brings. The context is about the work of our High Priest in heaven, offering gifts and sacrifices for us, which is made possible because of His once and for all offering at the Cross. Christ must shed His blood before He can offer it.

Q: What does Christ our High Priest, have to offer on our behalf before God?

Paul asks this same question in Hebrews 8:3, and it is not until you get to Hebrews 9:11, 12 that he answers his question.

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us].” Hebrews 9:11, 12

The words here “*greater and more perfect tabernacle*” does not refer to the heavenly or earthly tabernacle. But the perfect life of Christ, His body temple, the dwelling place of the Spirit of God. See John 2:18-21, Mark 14:58 and 2 Corinthians 5:1.

Here we have the answer to what our High Priest has to offer before God. Not the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood. (Leviticus 17:11 *Life is in the blood*). Christ our High Priest stands before the Father offering His perfect life on our behalf.

And this friends is the life our Lord is seeking to impart to His people. This is the “third person of the Godhead.” The life Jesus lived by

faith, through the indwelling Spirit of His Father, and given unto His disciples. See John 14:20-23

This life was not available before the cross, it had to be first lived and then sacrificed and now we can receive it by faith.

This is the life our Lord lived and offered through the eternal Spirit or by virtue of His eternal Spirit, as it reads in the original Hebrews 9:14.

Thus Paul can confidently declare *“Having therefore, brethren. Boldness, to enter into the holiest (holy places) by the blood (life) of Jesus . By a new and living way. Which he hath consecrated (opened) for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.”* Hebrews 10:19, 20

Yes friends our High Priest has opened a new and living way to bring us back to God. It’s no longer through the veil, but through His flesh. This word flesh (sarx) – σάρξ 4561 Strong’s – means body, kindred, human nature.

It is through our lord’s divine human nature, the very life He offered for us at the cross. Hebrews 9:14, Acts 20:28. That he offers on our behalf before the Father.

It is “new” because His once and for all sacrifice brought to an end the sacrificial service. *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.”* Hebrews 10:4

It is new because it had never been done before, *“for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified”* Hebrews 10:14

It is “living” because our saviour *“ever liveth to make intercession for them.”*

The new and living way is the way of salvation from sin, through faith in the righteousness of Christ imparted to the believer. We are truly blessed to live this side of the cross and receive *“the Spirit of His Son.”*

The remainder of Monday's lesson quotes John 3:16, 15:13, 1 John 3:16 and asks us how we "understand the nature of love as depicted in the scriptures?"

For us, the scriptures clearly depict the love of God through recording the fact (Jesus' own words) "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*"

In 1John 4:9 we read "*In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live (victoriously) through him.*"

Yes friends, God manifests His love "toward us" through the gift of His only begotten Son.

This is the love the Scriptures reveal.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 Jn 4:10

The question we ask is, how does the Trinitarian understand the love of God, when they reject God truly gave of His Son?

Monday

Joy and Peace

Monday's lesson states "the idea of joy and peace as the fruit of the Spirit is susceptible to misrepresentation. Our world is a sinful world, we are sinful beings, each one of us suffering the effects of sin, sickness, loss, separation, fear, worry, uncertainty the list goes on. No one, even a Christian, is immune to the painful struggle that afflict us in a fallen world. Jesus suffered, we are going to as well."

It is true, that we will have tribulation in this world. In fact Jesus promised we would.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Notice where our peace comes from "*in me*," it is found in Christ. And why do we have joy (*good cheer*)? Because Jesus has overcome the world, and in Him His disciples can also overcome the world.

Q: Can we find peace in the world?

A: "*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*" John 14:27

The peace Jesus has promised to His disciples is His own, "*my peace I give unto you.*"

This peace passeth all understanding

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7

Notice the harmony in these last three texts

“in me ye might have peace”

“my peace I give unto you”

“the peace of God Keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ”

The fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace etc is the fruit of Christ’s character. The fruit of His life. And when we receive His life by faith, we receive His love, His Joy and His peace.

Psalms 119:165 – *“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them”*

True peace can come only through obeying God. Notice it is called *“Great peace,”* this is victory over sin, that’s why it goes on to say *“nothing shall offend them.”* In the Hebrew it reads nothing shall cause them to fall.

If in keeping God’s law we receive righteousness and peace in the life. Then the opposite must be true, for the one who disobeys God’s law.

“O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:”
Isaiah 48:18

“[There is] no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” Isaiah 57:21

You cannot have true peace without righteousness. It is the victory over sin that brings peace and assurance to the soul.

“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.” Isaiah 32:17

So although our Saviour promised, we would have tribulation, He also promised “*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*” and “*my peace I give unto you.*”

Even in tribulation we have the assurance that Christ is by our side

And “*in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us*” Romans 8:37

Tuesday

Long-suffering

An excellent point is made in Tuesday's lesson.

“Our patience and long-suffering with others should stem, at least partly, from our realisation of God's patience and long-suffering for us.”

This is true, it is a lesson we all need to learn. Every soul “has been purchased with the blood of Christ.”

As we study how gently and patiently God deals with His people, especially in our own lives. How careful must we be in our conduct with each other.

Our Lord gave a very solemn warning to those who would cause His children to stumble. Luke 17:2

Notice how mindful the apostle Paul was of his ministry to others.

1 Thessalonians 2:7, 10, 11

But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: vs 7

Ye [are] witnesses, and God [also], how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father [doth] his children, vs 10, 11

Scripture is full of examples of God's long-suffering with all people. The sparing of the inhabitants of Ninevah when they repented of all their wickedness, reveals how merciful and long-suffering God is in His dealing with the nations.

In fact everyone in heaven will be their because of God's longsuffering toward each one.

Jesus is our greatest example of patiently enduring, and trusting in God. From his childhood, His was a life of patient toil. "Even in his youth He had to learn the hard lesson of silence and patient endurance." {DA 86}

"Misunderstood by His brothers," pronounced "narrow and strait-minded" by His friends, suffering "rebuke and censure" for non-compliance to the traditions of the rabbis, which made "His life a bitter one." On occasions even His mother would remonstrate with Him and urge "Him to conform to the usages of the rabbis."

And yet, "At all times and in all places He manifested a loving interest in men, and shed about Him the light of a cheerful piety." {DA 86.3}

In His ministry, Jesus was often misunderstood by his disciples. Denied by one, betrayed by another, and forsaken by all when He needed them most. Yet his thoughts, and concerns were always for others, His longsuffering for others knew no bounds, even on the cross he prayed for his tormentors.

Every disciple of Jesus, will manifest the fruit of longsuffering as they contemplate His self-sacrificing life.

"It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross." {DA 83.4}

Wednesday

Gentleness and Goodness

The commentary on Wednesday states “It’s interesting, how the fruit of the Spirit all reflect aspects of the character of Jesus. Go back over what we’ve looked at so far regarding the fruit of the Spirit. In each case, these attributes are all found in Jesus. Thus, when we look at Christ, we can see the greatest revelation possible of goodness and gentleness, because as God, Jesus reflected these fruits perfectly. Thus, as we can see, the more we manifest the fruit of the Spirit, the more we will be like Jesus.”

In last weeks study we saw from Inspiration how Jesus “From the first dawning of intelligence He was constantly growing in spiritual grace and knowledge of truth.” {DA 70.3}

The very next words in the Desire of Ages statement are – “Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did.” {DA 70.4} This is true for “spiritual grace” as well.

Jesus did not possess the fruit of the Spirit because He was God. This is a Catholic teaching.

The scripture records He “*increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.*” Luke 2:52

Inspiration declares of His upbringing that “through the Holy Spirit she (Mary) received wisdom to co-operate with the heavenly agencies in the development of this child.”

This perfect life, Christ developed through a life in “harmony with God.”

“As one with us, a sharer in our needs and weaknesses, He was wholly dependent upon God, In a world of sin Jesus endured struggles and torture of soul. In communion with God He could unburden the sorrows that were crushing Him. Here He found comfort and joy.” {DA 362.4}

“In Christ the cry of humanity reached the Father of infinite pity. As a man He supplicated the throne of God till His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that should connect humanity with divinity.... His experience is to be ours.” {DA 363.1}

This is the point, as our example Christ exercised no power to overcome that is not available to us.

To state “as God Jesus reflected these traits perfectly” is to imply He cannot be truly our example, for He manifested a perfect character because He was God. This is why Catholicism teaches the mediation of the saints. To them God the Son in the trinity is separate from us, even on earth He had a different nature to us (even many Adventists believe this). Thus the dead saints and Mary are elevated to mediators between the people and God.

If Christ cannot be our example, if all He achieved was accomplished because “as God” He lived a perfect life. Then obviously the follower of Christ will never reach the standard He Himself left for us to follow. This means complete victory over sin is impossible.

But we are told “His experience is to be ours.” His life is to become our life in all its fullness. Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:16-19.

Wednesday’s study asks for examples of Jesus exhibiting goodness and gentleness.

The feast at Simon’s house, is an excellent example of our Lord’s gentleness. This account is recorded in all four gospels, and is essential for our learning in dealing with others.

The Desire of Ages page 557-568 beautifully outlines the gentleness and kindness Jesus showed towards the proud Pharisee, and how he won him as a self-sacrificing disciple.

Please read the whole story. In the wisdom and kindness Jesus showed in dealing with Simon, there is a much needed lesson for us today. If the Lord had in any way reprov'd the Pharisee before his guests, it would have destroyed him eternally.

I will just quote one paragraph.

“Simon was touched by the kindness of Jesus in not openly rebuking him before the guests. He had not been treated as he desired Mary to be treated. He saw that Jesus did not wish to expose his guilt to others, but sought by a true statement of the case to convince his mind, and by pitying kindness to subdue his heart. Stern denunciation would have hardened Simon against repentance, but patient admonition convinced him of his error. He saw the magnitude of the debt which he owed his Lord. His pride was humbled, he repented, and the proud Pharisee became a lowly, self-sacrificing disciple.” {DA 567.5}

May we learn from our Lord's example, and remember “*A soft answer turneth away wrath.*” Proverbs 15:1

Thursday

Faith

The lesson correctly states, faith is a gift of God. Ephesians 2:8

The last paragraph correctly highlights the importance of daily cultivating faith. “If faith is not cherished, if it’s not nurtured, protected, and strengthened it will degenerate into mere belief and maybe eventually into unbelief.”

This is good counsel, we are told in Romans 12:23 that “*God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*”

And our faith is strengthened when we “*receive with meekness the engrafted word*” James 1:21

“*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” Romans 10:17.

As we have noted the gifts and fruit of the Spirit are all the characteristics of Christ’s life. Then to what measure of faith can we receive?

Paul declared “*I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*” Galatians 2:20

We can receive the faith of the Son of God!

Scripture records before the second coming, God will have a people who “*keep the commandments of God, and (keep) the faith of Jesus.*” Revelation 14:12

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Hebrews 11:3

And it is by faith that we can believe the same word which created things out of nothing, can recreate us after the divine similitude.

Before healing the two blind men who diligently sought Him, Jesus asked *“Believe ye that I am able do to this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.”* Matthew 9:28-29

Our Lord is asking the same question today. *“Do you believe I am able to do this?”*

His word testifies He *“is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy”* Jude 24

Those who stand to see their Saviour return in glory will have believed that He *“is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us”* Ephesians 3:20

These will be they who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus.

Friday

In Friday's lesson we read "Discipline and control the mental faculties. Self-control is a power that all may possess. It is gained by placing the will wholly on the side of God, taking the will of God for your will." Our High Calling p219

This is really the key in accessing the promises of God and revealing the fruit of the Spirit in the life. Surrendering the will to God and receiving the life of Jesus by Faith.

"The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. This Spirit works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of this Spirit reveal its fruit,--love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. {RH, October 26, 1897 par. 15}

Dear friend read this statement carefully – "The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul."

Q: How does the Spirit work in the believer?

A: "The Spirit works in and through every one who receives Christ"

This doesn't mean receiving Christ, because you profess to believe in Him. It means to receive "the life of Christ in the soul."

Notice the next words "Those who know the indwelling of this Spirit reveal its fruit."

In other words, those who know "the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul", will reveal the fruit of that life.

But you must believe. The last words Jesus spoke to His disciples, in fact He spoke them while He was ascending;

"Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world"

This is why on the day of Pentecost and throughout their lives “the believers thrilled with the conscious presence of their ascended Lord...” GC 351

They knew Jesus was their comforter, Had He not promised them “*I will come to you.*”

Friends the disciples knew who the Spirit was. They understood it was “*the Lord working with them*” Mark 16:20 and this truth empowered them to bring the gospel to the world.

Let us leave aside the traditions of men, and believe the promises of God.

“*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*”

When God’s people awaken to this truth, “*the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you.*” Acts 3:19,20

Amen

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