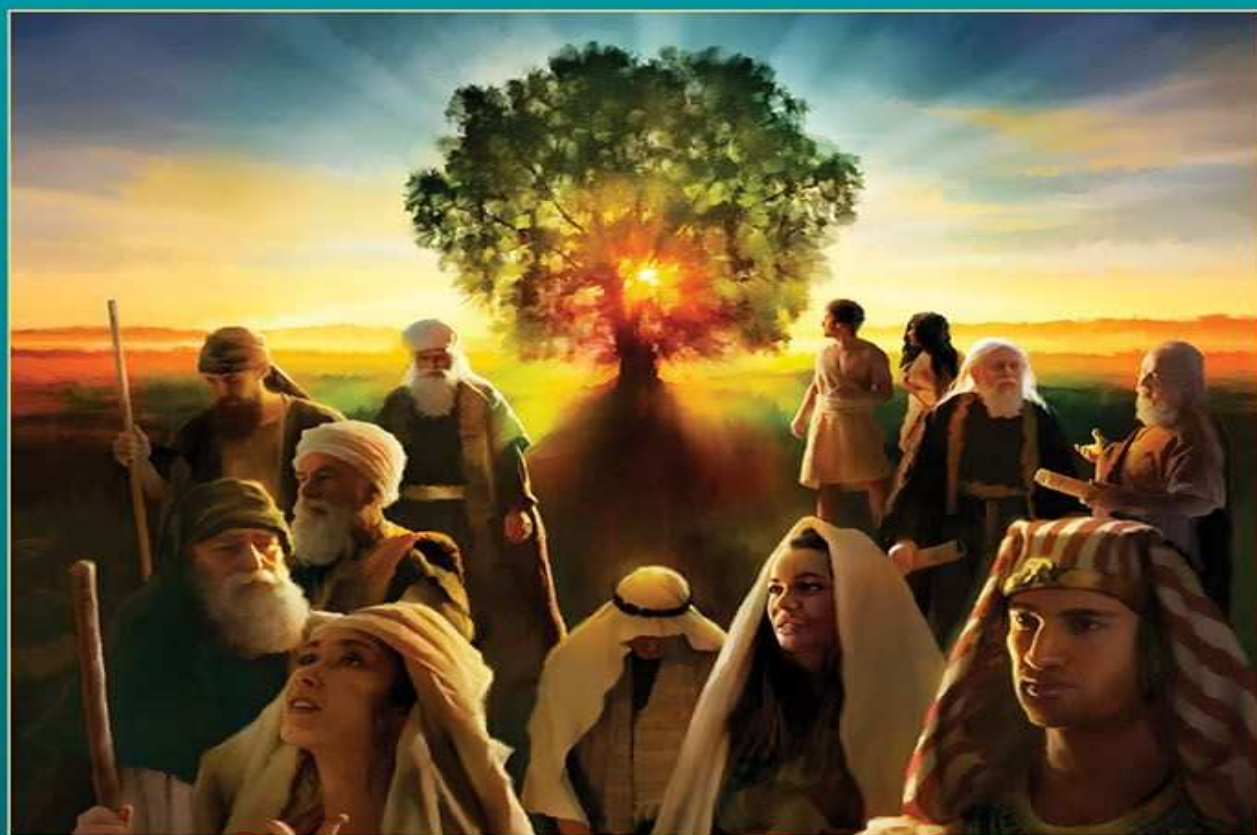
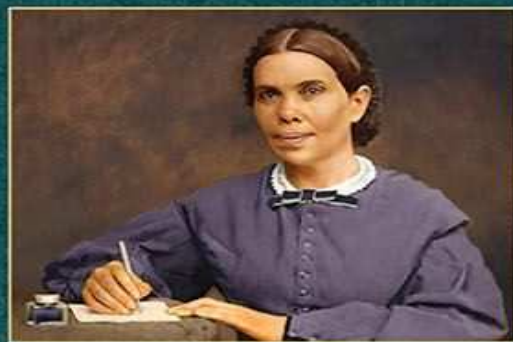


Ellen G. White
NOTES
for the Sabbath School Lessons



GENESIS

April | May | June 2022

Spirit of Prophecy quotations arranged for
daily study with the adult Bible study guides

E. G. White

Notes for the Adult Bible Study Guide

Ellen G. White Notes for the Sabbath School Lessons (ISSN 1076-2434) is published quarterly by Pacific Press[®] Publishing Association, 1350 N. Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687-3193, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Nampa, Idaho, and at additional mailing offices. One-year subscription in the USA, \$17.80; single copy, \$4.99. One-year subscription to countries outside USA, \$25.80. All prices at USA exchange. When a change of address is desired, please send both old and new addresses. Vol. 30, no. 2.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **Ellen G. White Notes for the Sabbath School Lessons**, PO Box 5353, Nampa, ID 83653-5353.

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Printed in the United States of America.

Genesis

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Lesson 1

The Creation

Sabbath Afternoon, March 26

In God's Word only we find an authentic account of creation. . . . In this Word only can we find a history of our race unsullied by human prejudice or human pride. . . . Here we may hold communion with patriarchs and prophets and listen to the voice of the Eternal as He speaks with men. Here we behold the Majesty of Heaven, as He humbled Himself to become our substitute and surety, to cope single-handed with the powers of darkness and to gain the victory in our behalf. A reverent contemplation of such themes as these cannot fail to soften, purify, and ennoble the heart and at the same time to inspire the mind with new strength and vigor.—*My Life Today*, p. 107.

God speaks to the human family in language they can comprehend. He does not leave the matter so indefinite that human beings can handle it according to their theories. When the Lord declares that He made the world in six days and rested on the seventh day, He means the day of twenty-four hours, which He has marked off by the rising and setting of the sun. . . .

. . . After He had created our world and man, He looked upon the work that He had done, and pronounced it very good. And when the foundation of the earth was laid, the foundation of the Sabbath was laid also. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. In giving the Sabbath, God considered man's spiritual and physical health.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 136.

In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation. It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. "His strength setteth fast the mountains." "The sea is His, and He

made it.” Psalm 65:6; 95:5. It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song. And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father’s love.

Now sin has marred God’s perfect work, yet that handwriting remains. Even now all created things declare the glory of His excellence.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 20.

Through the creation we are to become acquainted with the Creator. The book of nature is a great lesson book, which in connection with the Scriptures we are to use in teaching others of His character, and guiding lost sheep back to the fold of God. . . .

In these lessons direct from nature, there is a simplicity and purity that makes them of the highest value. All need the teaching to be derived from this source. In itself the beauty of nature leads the soul away from sin and worldly attractions, and toward purity, peace, and God.—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 24.

Sunday, March 27: The God of Creation

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. . . .

Above all lower orders of being, God designed that man, the crowning work of His creation, should express His thought and reveal His glory. But man is not to exalt himself as God.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 415.

Through the psalmist the message was given to Israel, “Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise.” Psalm 100:2-4. And of all who keep “the Sabbath from polluting it,” the Lord declares, “Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer.” Isaiah 56:6, 7.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 288.

In the name of Jesus we may come into God’s presence with the confidence of a child. No man is needed to act as a mediator. Through Jesus we may open our hearts to God as to one who knows and loves us.

In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but God’s can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hidden desires and longings to the Father of infinite pity, and in the hush and silence of the soul that voice which never fails to answer the cry of human need will speak to our hearts.

“The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” James 5:11. He waits with unwearied love to hear the confessions of the wayward and to accept their penitence. He watches for some return of gratitude from us, as the mother watches for the smile of recognition from her beloved child. He

would have us understand how earnestly and tenderly His heart yearns over us. He invites us to take our trials to His sympathy, our sorrows to His love, our wounds to His healing, our weakness to His strength, our emptiness to His fullness. Never has one been disappointed who came unto Him. “They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.” Psalm 34:5.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 84, 85.

Monday, March 28: The Creation

The earth came forth from the hand of the Creator exceedingly beautiful. There were mountains and hills and plains; and interspersed among them were rivers and bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain, but the monotony of the scenery was broken by hills and mountains, not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the earth. The waters were regularly dispersed. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains were adorned with plants and flowers, and tall, majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger and much more beautiful than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 47.

God's created works testify to His love and power. He has called the world into being, with all that it contains. God is a lover of the beautiful; and in the world which He has fitted up for us He has not only given us everything necessary for our comfort, but He has filled the heavens and the earth with beauty. We see His love and care in the rich fields of autumn, and His smile in the glad sunshine. His hand has made the castle-like rocks and the towering mountains. The lofty trees grow at His command; He has spread earth's green velvet carpet and dotted it with shrubs and flowers.

Why has He clothed the earth and trees with living green, instead of with dark, somber brown? Is it not that they may be more pleasing to the eye? And shall not our hearts be filled with gratitude as we read the evidences of His wisdom and love in the wonders of His creation?—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 185.

No finite mind can fully comprehend the existence, the power, the wisdom, or the works of the Infinite One. Says the sacred writer: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell;

what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” Job 11:7-9. The mightiest intellects of earth cannot comprehend God. Men may be ever searching, ever learning, and still there is an infinity beyond.

Yet the works of creation testify of God’s power and greatness. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork.” Psalm 19:1. Those who take the written word as their counselor will find in science an aid to understand God. “The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.” Romans 1:20.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 116.

Tuesday, March 29: The Sabbath

By thus setting apart the Sabbath, God gave the world a memorial. He did not set apart one day and any day in seven, but one particular day, the seventh day. And by observing the Sabbath, we show that we recognize God as the living God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

There is nothing in the Sabbath that restricts it to any particular class of people. It was given for all mankind. It is to be employed, not in indolence, but in the contemplation of the works of God. This men are to do that they may “know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.”

The Lord draws very nigh to His people on the day that He has blessed and sanctified. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” The Sabbath is God’s memorial, pointing men to their Creator, who made the world and all things that are therein.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 136, 137.

“The importance of the Sabbath as the memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God”—because He is the Creator, and we are His creatures. “The Sabbath therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship, for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten.”—J. N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, chapter 27.

. . . So long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial. Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man’s thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 437, 438.

“Wherefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.” These words are full of instruction and comfort. Because the Sabbath was made for

man, it is the Lord's day. It belongs to Christ. For "all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:3. Since He made all things, He made the Sabbath. By Him it was set apart as a memorial of the work of creation. It points to Him as both the Creator and the Sanctifier. . . . The Sabbath is a sign of Christ's power to make us holy. And it is given to all whom Christ makes holy. As a sign of His sanctifying power, the Sabbath is given to all who through Christ become a part of the Israel of God.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 288.

Wednesday, March 30: The Creation of Humanity

The Lord created man out of the dust of the earth. He made Adam a partaker of His life, His nature. There was breathed into him the breath of the Almighty, and he became a living soul. Adam was perfect in form—strong, comely, pure, bearing the image of his Maker.

Man came from the hand of his Creator perfect in organization and beautiful in form. The fact that he has for six thousand years withstood the ever-increasing weight of disease and crime is conclusive proof of the power of endurance with which he was first endowed.

Adam was crowned king in Eden. To him was given dominion over every living thing that God had created. The Lord blessed Adam and Eve with intelligence such as He had not given to any other creature.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1082.

Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God. . . . Man is very dear to God, because he was formed in His own image.

As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator he was of noble height and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful. His complexion was neither white nor sallow, but ruddy, glowing with the rich tint of health. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders. She too was noble, perfect in symmetry, and very beautiful. . . .

Created to be “the image and glory of God,” Adam and Eve had received endowments not unworthy of their high destiny. Graceful and symmetrical in form, regular and beautiful in feature, their countenances glowing with the tint of health and the light of joy and hope, they bore in outward resemblance the likeness of their Maker.—*My Life Today*, p. 126.

The Lord was pleased with this last and noblest of all His creatures, and designed that he should be the perfect inhabitant of a perfect world. But it was not His purpose that man should live in solitude. He said: “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided “an help meet for him”—a helper corresponding to him—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self; showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation.—*The Adventist Home*, p. 25.

Thursday, March 31: The Duty of Humanity

The Lord's purposes are not the purposes of men. He did not design that men should live in idleness. In the beginning He created man a gentleman; but though rich in all that the Owner of the universe could supply, Adam was not to be idle. No sooner was he created than his work was given him. He was to find employment and happiness in tending the things that God had created, and in response to his labor his wants were to be abundantly supplied from the fruits of the Garden of Eden.

While our first parents obeyed God, their labor in the garden was a pleasure, and the earth yielded of its abundance for their wants. —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 273, 274.

God gave Adam and Eve employment. Eden was the school for our first parents, and God was their instructor. They learned how to till the soil and to care for the things which the Lord had planted. They did not regard labor as degrading, but as a great blessing. Industry was a pleasure to Adam and Eve. The fall of Adam changed the order of things; the earth was cursed: but the decree that man should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, was not given as a curse. Through faith and hope, labor was to be a blessing to the descendants of Adam and Eve.—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 314.

God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. "Marriage is honourable" (Hebrews 13:4); it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature. . . .

The home of our first parents was to be a pattern for other homes as their children should go forth to occupy the earth. . . . God placed Adam in a garden. This was his dwelling. . . . In the surroundings of the holy pair was a lesson for all time—that true happiness is found, not in the

indulgence of pride and luxury, but in communion with God through His created works. If men would give less attention to the artificial, and would cultivate greater simplicity, they would come far nearer to answering the purpose of God in their creation.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 166.

Friday, April 1: For Further Reading

The Story of Redemption, “The Creation,” pp. 21, 22;

Sons and Daughters of God, “He Is Near to All Who Call Upon Him,” p.
19.

Lesson 2

The Fall

Sabbath Afternoon, April 2

When our first parents were placed in the beautiful garden of Eden, they were tested in regard to their loyalty to God. They were free to choose the service of God, or by disobedience to ally themselves with the enemy of God and man. . . . If they [disregarded] God's commands, and listened to the voice of Satan, as he spoke through the serpent, they would not only forfeit their claim to Eden, but to life itself. . . .

Adam and Eve were permitted to partake of every tree in the Garden save one. There was only a single prohibition. The forbidden tree was as attractive and lovely as any of the trees in the Garden. It was called the tree of knowledge, because in partaking of that tree, of which God had said, "Thou shalt not eat of it," (Genesis 2:17) they would have a knowledge of sin, an experience in disobedience.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 14.

It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin. . . . Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" [1 John 3:4] it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 492, 493.

Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This

work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2.

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal." Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 22.

Sunday, April 3: The Serpent

Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 21, 22.

The tempter intimated [to Eve] that the divine warning was not to be actually fulfilled; it was designed merely to intimidate them. . . .

Such has been Satan's work from the days of Adam to the present, and he has pursued it with great success. He tempts men to distrust God's love and to doubt His wisdom. He is constantly seeking to excite a spirit of irreverent curiosity, a restless, inquisitive desire to penetrate the secrets of divine wisdom and power. In their efforts to search out what God has been pleased to withhold, multitudes overlook the truths which He has revealed, and which are essential to salvation.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 15.

God has declared that man's only means of safety is entire obedience to all His words. We are not to make the experiment of testing the evil course, with all its results. This will bring weakness through disobedience. God's plan was to give man clear-sightedness in all his work. . . .

After the fall Christ became Adam's instructor. He acted in God's stead toward humanity, saving the race from immediate death. He took upon Him the office of mediator. Adam and Eve were given a probation in which to return to their allegiance, and in this plan all their posterity were embraced.

Without the atonement of the Son of God there could have been no communication of blessing or salvation from God to man. God was jealous

for the honor of His law. The transgression of that law had caused a fearful separation between God and man. To Adam in his innocence was granted communion, direct, free, and happy, with his Maker. After his transgression, God would communicate to man only through Christ and angels.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 20.

Monday, April 4: The Forbidden Fruit

With what intense interest the whole universe watched the conflict that was to decide the position of Adam and Eve. How attentively the angels listened to the words of Satan, the originator of sin, as he . . . sought to make of none effect the law of God through his deceptive reasoning! How anxiously they waited to see if the holy pair would be deluded by the tempter, and yield to his arts! They asked themselves, Will the holy pair transfer their faith and love from the Father and Son to Satan? Will they accept his falsehoods as truth?

Adam and Eve persuaded themselves that in so small a matter as eating of the forbidden fruit, there could not result such terrible consequences as God had declared. But this small matter was sin, the transgression of God's immutable and holy law, and it opened the floodgates of death and untold woe upon our world. . . . Let us not esteem sin as a trivial thing.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 14.

The angels had cautioned Eve to beware of separating herself from her husband while occupied in their daily labor in the garden; with him she would be in less danger from temptation than if she were alone. But absorbed in her pleasing task, she unconsciously wandered from his side. . . . She soon found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the forbidden tree. The fruit was very beautiful, and she questioned with herself why God had withheld it from them. Now was the tempter's opportunity. As if he were able to discern the workings of her mind, he addressed her: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" . . .

Eve really believed the words of Satan, but her belief did not save her from the penalty of sin. She disbelieved the words of God, and this was what led to her fall. In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 15.

The people of God should be able to meet [Satan], as did our Saviour, with the words, "It is written." Satan can quote Scripture now as in the

days of Christ, and he will pervert its teachings to sustain his delusions. But the plain statements of the Bible will furnish weapons powerful in every conflict.

Those who would stand in the time of peril must understand the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead, for in the near future many will be confronted by the spirits of devils personating beloved relatives or friends and declaring the most dangerous heresies. These visitants will appeal to our tenderest sympathies and will work miracles to sustain their pretensions. We must be prepared to withstand them with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything, and that they who thus appear are the spirits of devils.

Long has Satan been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden, "Ye shall not surely die:" . . . Genesis 3:4. Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of Spiritualism.—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 398.

Tuesday, April 5: Hiding Before God

The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering.

This is what the transgressors of God's law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve's disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God.

But this they can never do. Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 310, 311.

The best efforts that man in his own strength can make, are valueless to meet the holy and just law that he has transgressed; but through faith in Christ he may claim the righteousness of the Son of God as all-sufficient. Christ satisfied the demands of the law in His human nature. He bore the curse of the law for the sinner, made an atonement for him, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Genuine faith appropriates the righteousness of Christ, and the sinner is made an overcomer with Christ; for he is made a partaker of the divine nature, and thus divinity and humanity are combined.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 363, 364.

No sooner had the first pair sinned than they began to accuse each other; and this is what human nature will inevitably do when uncontrolled by the grace of Christ.

When men indulge this accusing spirit, they are not satisfied with pointing out what they suppose to be a defect in their brother. If milder means fail of making him do what they think ought to be done, they will resort to compulsion. Just as far as lies in their power they will force men to comply with their ideas of what is right. This is what the Jews did in the days of Christ and what the church has done ever since whenever she has lost the grace of Christ. Finding herself destitute of the power of love, she has reached out for the strong arm of the state to enforce her dogmas and execute her decrees. Here is the secret of all religious laws that have ever been enacted, and the secret of all persecution from the days of Abel to our own time.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 126, 127.

Wednesday, April 6: The Fate of the Serpent

Since it had been employed as Satan's medium, the serpent was to share the visitation of divine judgment. From the most beautiful and admired of the creatures of the field, it was to become the most groveling and detested of them all, feared and hated by both man and beast. The words next addressed to the serpent applied directly to Satan himself, pointing forward to his ultimate defeat and destruction: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." . . .

This sentence, uttered in the hearing of our first parents, was to them a promise. While it foretold war between man and Satan, it declared that the power of the great adversary would finally be broken.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 58, 65, 66.

There is not a soul won to Christ . . . without defeat to the tempter, and bruising of the head of the serpent. This will arouse the malice of the adversary to greater activity. . . . Alarmed because he is losing his prey, Satan will first seek to deceive, next to oppress and persecute. Evil men, rebuked by the precept and example of those who come to the light of Bible truth, will become agents of the great adversary of souls and will leave no means untried to draw them away from their allegiance to God and induce them to leave the narrow path of holiness.

But none need to be alarmed and afraid. God's word is pledged that if they are true to principle, if they believe and obey all God's requirements, they are members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. They are certain to have enlisted in their behalf the agencies of heaven and to come off victorious through the merits of Christ—more than conquerors through Him that loved them.—*Our High Calling*, p. 89.

[At the time of the second death] Satan and his angels suffered long. Satan bore not only the weight and punishment of his own sins, but also of the sins of the redeemed host, which had been placed upon him; and he must also suffer for the ruin of souls which he had caused. Then I saw that Satan and all the wicked host were consumed, and the justice of God was

satisfied; and all the angelic host, and all the redeemed saints, with a loud voice said, "Amen!"

Said the angel, "Satan is the root, his children are the branches. They are now consumed root and branch. They have died an everlasting death. They are never to have a resurrection, and God will have a clean universe." I then looked and saw the fire which had consumed the wicked, burning up the rubbish and purifying the earth. Again I looked and saw the earth purified. There was not a single sign of the curse. The broken, uneven surface of the earth now looked like a level, extensive plain. God's entire universe was clean, and the great controversy was forever ended.—*Early Writings*, pp. 294, 295.

Thursday, April 7: Human Destiny

Adam understood that his companion had transgressed the command of God, disregarded the only prohibition laid upon them as a test of their fidelity and love. There was a terrible struggle in his mind. He mourned that he had permitted Eve to wander from his side. But now the deed was done; he must be separated from her whose society had been his joy. How could he have it thus? Adam had enjoyed the companionship of God and of holy angels. He had looked upon the glory of the Creator. He understood the high destiny opened to the human race should they remain faithful to God. Yet all these blessings were lost sight of in the fear of losing that one gift which in his eyes outvalued every other. . . . He resolved to share her fate; if she must die, he would die with her.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 56.

When God made man, He made him ruler over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him. But when he rebelled against the divine law, the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule. Thus the Lord, in His great mercy, would show men the sacredness of His law, and lead them, by their own experience, to see the danger of setting it aside, even in the slightest degree.

And the life of toil and care which was henceforth to be man's lot was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. It was a part of God's great plan for man's recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 18.

When Adam and Eve realized how exalted and sacred was the law of God, the transgression of which made so costly a sacrifice necessary to save them and their posterity from utter ruin, they pleaded to die themselves, or to let them and their posterity endure the penalty of their transgression, rather than that the beloved Son of God should make this great sacrifice. The anguish of Adam was increased. He saw that his sins were of so great magnitude as to involve fearful consequences. And must

it be that heaven's honored Commander, who had walked with him and talked with him while in his holy innocence, whom angels honored and worshiped, must be brought down from his exalted position to die because of his transgression? . . .

. . . The Father could not abolish or change one precept of His law to meet man in his fallen condition. But the Son of God, who had in unison with the Father created man, could make an atonement for man acceptable to God, by giving His life a sacrifice and bearing the wrath of His Father. Angels informed Adam that, as his transgression had brought death and wretchedness, life and immortality would be brought to light through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 47, 48.

Friday, April 8: For Further Reading

Our High Calling, “How to Maintain Your Integrity,” p. 94;
Prophets and Kings, “In the Spirit and Power of Elias,” pp. 177–179.

Lesson 3

Cain and His Legacy

Sabbath Afternoon, April 9

Christ was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. The death of Abel was in consequence of Cain's refusing to accept God's plan in the school of obedience, to be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, typified by the sacrificial offerings pointing to Christ. Cain refused the shedding of blood, which symbolized the blood of Christ to be shed for the world. This whole ceremony was prepared by God, and Christ became the foundation of the whole system. This is the beginning of its work as the schoolmaster to bring sinful human agents to a consideration of Christ.

All who did service in connection with the sanctuary were being educated constantly in regard to the intervention of Christ in behalf of the human race. This service was designed to create in every heart a love for the law of God, which is the law of His kingdom. The sacrificial offering was to be an object lesson of the love of God revealed in Christ—in the suffering, dying victim, who took upon Himself the sin of which man was guilty, the innocent being made sin for us.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1109.

Since the announcement to the serpent in Eden, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed" (Genesis 3:15), Satan had known that he did not hold absolute sway over the world. There was seen in men the working of a power that withstood his dominion. With intense interest he watched the sacrifices offered by Adam and his sons. In these ceremonies he discerned a symbol of communion between earth and heaven. He set himself to intercept this communion. He misrepresented God, and misinterpreted the rites that pointed to the Saviour. Men were led to fear God as one who delighted in their destruction. The sacrifices that should have revealed His love were offered only to appease His wrath. Satan excited the evil passions of men,

in order to fasten his rule upon them. When God's written word was given, Satan studied the prophecies of the Saviour's advent. From generation to generation he worked to blind the people to these prophecies, that they might reject Christ at His coming.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 115.

The Pharisee and the publican represent two great classes into which those who come to worship God are divided. Their first two representatives are found in the first two children that were born into the world. Cain thought himself righteous, and he came to God with a thank offering only. He made no confession of sin, and acknowledged no need of mercy. But Abel came with the blood that pointed to the Lamb of God. He came as a sinner, confessing himself lost; his only hope was the unmerited love of God. The Lord had respect to his offering, but to Cain and his offering He had not respect. The sense of need, the recognition of our poverty and sin, is the very first condition of acceptance with God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 152.

Sunday, April 10: Cain and Abel

The Saviour's coming was foretold in Eden. When Adam and Eve first heard the promise, they looked for its speedy fulfillment. They joyfully welcomed their first-born son, hoping that he might be the Deliverer. But the fulfillment of the promise tarried. Those who first received it died without the sight. . . .

But like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay. . . . So in heaven's council the hour for the coming of Christ had been determined. When the great clock of time pointed to that hour, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 31, 32.

Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, differed widely in character. Abel had a spirit of loyalty to God; he saw justice and mercy in the Creator's dealings with the fallen race, and gratefully accepted the hope of redemption. But Cain cherished feelings of rebellion, and murmured against God because of the curse pronounced upon the earth and upon the human race for Adam's sin. He permitted his mind to run in the same channel that led to Satan's fall—indulging the desire for self-exaltation and questioning the divine justice and authority.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 71.

To encourage the love of amusement is to discourage the love of religious exercises, for the heart becomes so crowded with trifling, with what is pleasing to the natural heart, that there is no room for Jesus. . . .

It requires the faith that works by love and purifies the soul to meet the mind of God. There are those who believe in Christ; they do not think Him an impostor; they believe the Bible to be a revelation of His divine character. They admire its holy doctrines, and revere the name, the only name given under heaven whereby men can be saved, and yet, with all this knowledge, they may be as truly ignorant of the grace of God as the veriest sinner. They have not opened the heart to let Jesus in.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 307.

The time is not far off when the people of God will be called upon to give their testimony before the rulers of the earth. Not one in twenty has a realization of what rapid strides we are making toward the great crisis in our history. . . . There is no time for vanity, for trifling, for engaging the mind in unimportant matters. . . .

You now have an opportunity to attain to the greatest intellectual power through the study of the Word of God. But if you are indolent, and fail to dig deep in the mines of truth, you will not be ready for the crisis that is soon to come upon us. O that you would realize that each moment is golden. If you live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, you will not be found unprepared.—*Our High Calling*, p. 355.

Monday, April 11: The Two Offerings

These brothers were tested, as Adam had been tested before them, to prove whether they would believe and obey the word of God. They were acquainted with the provision made for the salvation of man, and understood the system of offerings which God had ordained. They knew that in these offerings they were to express faith in the Saviour whom the offerings typified, and at the same time to acknowledge their total dependence on Him for pardon; and they knew that by thus conforming to the divine plan for their redemption, they were giving proof of their obedience to the will of God. Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin; and they were to show their faith in the blood of Christ as the promised atonement by offering the firstlings of the flock in sacrifice. Besides this, the first fruits of the earth were to be presented before the Lord as a thank offering.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 71.

Cain brought his offering unto the Lord with murmuring and infidelity in his heart in regard to the promised Sacrifice. He was unwilling to strictly follow the plan of obedience and procure a lamb and offer it with the fruit of the ground. He merely took of the ground and disregarded the requirement of God. God had made known to Adam that without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. Cain was not particular to bring even the best of the fruits. Abel advised his brother not to come before the Lord without the blood of sacrifice. Cain, being the eldest, would not listen to his brother. He despised his counsel, and with doubt and murmuring in regard to the necessity of the ceremonial offerings, he presented his offering. But God did not accept it.

Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat, as God had commanded; and in full faith of the Messiah to come, and with humble reverence, he presented the offering. God had respect unto his offering. A light flashes from heaven and consumes the offering of Abel. Cain sees no manifestation that his is accepted. He is angry with the Lord and with his brother.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 52, 53.

He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. If a man could save himself by his own works, he might have something in himself in which to rejoice. The effort that man makes in his own strength to obtain salvation, is represented by the offering of Cain. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation. — *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 364.

Tuesday, April 12: The Crime

It is claimed by some that the human race is in need, not of redemption, but of development—that it can refine, elevate, and regenerate itself. As Cain thought to secure the divine favor by an offering that lacked the blood of a sacrifice, so do these expect to exalt humanity to the divine standard, independent of the atonement. This history of Cain shows what must be the result. It shows what man will become apart from Christ. Humanity has no power to regenerate itself. It does not tend upward, toward the divine, but downward, toward the satanic. Christ is our only hope.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 25.

Cain did not repent. Instead of censuring and abhorring himself to his unbelief, he still complains of the injustice and partiality of God. And in his jealousy and hatred he contends with Abel and reproaches him. Abel meekly points out his brother's error, and shows him that the wrong is in himself. But Cain hates his brother from the moment that God manifests to him the tokens of his acceptance. His brother Abel seeks to appease his wrath by contending for the compassion of God in saving the lives of their parents, when he might have brought upon them immediate death. He tells Cain that God loved them, or he would not have given his Son, innocent and holy, to suffer the wrath which man by his disobedience deserved to suffer. While Abel justifies the plan of God, Cain becomes enraged and his anger increases and burns against Abel, until in his rage he slays him. God inquires of Cain for his brother, and Cain utters a guilty falsehood, "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" God . . . says to him, "Thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 49, 50.

It is not safe for us to linger to contemplate the advantages to be reaped through yielding to Satan's suggestions. Sin means dishonor and disaster to every soul that indulges in it; but it is blinding and deceiving in its

nature, and it will entice us with flattering presentations. If we venture on Satan's ground we have no assurance of protection from his power. So far as in us lies, we should close every avenue by which the tempter may find access to us. . . .

The only safeguard against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. It is because selfishness exists in our hearts that temptation has power over us. But when we behold the great love of God, selfishness appears to us in its hideous and repulsive character, and we desire to have it expelled from the soul. As the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, our hearts are softened and subdued, the temptation loses its power, and the grace of Christ transforms the character.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 118.

Wednesday, April 13: The Punishment of Cain

God had given Cain an opportunity to confess his sin. . . . He knew the enormity of the deed he had done, and of the falsehood he had uttered to conceal it; but he was rebellious still, and sentence was no longer deferred.

...

Notwithstanding that Cain had by his crimes merited the sentence of death, a merciful Creator still spared his life, and granted him opportunity for repentance. But Cain lived only to harden his heart, to encourage rebellion against the divine authority, and to become the head of a line of bold, abandoned sinners. This one apostate, led on by Satan, became a tempter to others; and his example and influence exerted their demoralizing power, until the earth became so corrupt and filled with violence as to call for its destruction. . . .

Upon receiving the curse of God, Cain had withdrawn from his father's household. . . . He had gone out from the presence of the Lord, cast away the promise of the restored Eden, to seek his possessions and enjoyment in the earth under the curse of sin, thus standing at the head of that great class of men who worship the god of this world. In that which pertains to mere earthly and material progress, his descendants became distinguished. But they were regardless of God, and in opposition to His purposes for man.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 27.

In sparing the life of Cain the murderer, God gave the world an example of what would be the result of permitting the sinner to live to continue a course of unbridled iniquity. Through the influence of Cain's teaching and example, multitudes of his descendants were led into sin, until "the wickedness of man was great in the earth" and "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." Genesis 6:5, 11.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 543.

God has given to every man his work; and if any one turns from the work that God has given him, to do the work of Satan, to defile his own body or lead another into sin, that man's work is cursed, and the brand of

Cain is placed upon him. The ruin of his victim will cry unto God, as did the blood of Abel.

Any man . . . who seeks to compel or control the reason of any other man, becomes an agent of Satan, to do his work, and in the sight of the heavenly universe he bears the mark of Cain.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1087.

Thursday, April 14: The Wickedness of Man

To Adam was given another son, to be the inheritor of the divine promise, the heir of the spiritual birthright. The name Seth, given to this son, signified “appointed,” or “compensation;” “for,” said the mother, “God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.” Seth was of more noble stature than Cain or Abel, and resembled Adam more closely than did his other sons. He was a worthy character, following in the steps of Abel. Yet he inherited no more natural goodness than did Cain. Concerning the creation of Adam it is said, “In the likeness of God made He him;” but man, after the Fall, “begat a son in his *own* likeness, after *his* image.” While Adam was created sinless, in the likeness of God, Seth, like Cain, inherited the fallen nature of his parents. But he received also the knowledge of the Redeemer and instruction in righteousness. By divine grace he served and honored God; and he labored, as Abel would have done, had he lived, to turn the minds of sinful men to revere and obey their Creator.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 80.

To the crime of murder, in which Cain had led the way, Lamech, the fifth in descent, added polygamy, and, boastfully defiant, he acknowledged God, only to draw from the avenging of Cain an assurance of his own safety. Abel had led a pastoral life, dwelling in tents or booths, and the descendants of Seth followed the same course, counting themselves “strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” seeking “a better country, that is, an heavenly.” Hebrews 11:13, 16.

For some time the two classes remained separate. The race of Cain, spreading from the place of their first settlement, dispersed over the plains and valleys where the children of Seth had dwelt; and the latter, in order to escape from their contaminating influence, withdrew to the mountains, and there made their home. So long as this separation continued, they maintained the worship of God in its purity. But in the lapse of time they ventured, little by little, to mingle with the inhabitants of the valleys. This association was productive of the worst results. “The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair.” The children of Seth, attracted by the beauty of the daughters of Cain’s descendants, displeased the Lord by

intermarrying with them. Many of the worshipers of God were beguiled into sin by the allurements that were now constantly before them, and they lost their peculiar, holy character. Mingling with the depraved, they became like them in spirit and in deeds; the restrictions of the seventh commandment were disregarded, “and they took them wives of all which they chose.” The children of Seth went “in the way of Cain” (Jude 11); they fixed their minds upon worldly prosperity and enjoyment and neglected the commandments of the Lord. Men “did not like to retain God in their knowledge;” they “became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” Romans 1:21. Therefore “God gave them over to a mind void of judgment.” Verse 28, margin. Sin spread abroad in the earth like a deadly leprosy.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 81, 82.

Friday, April 15: For Further Reading

That I May Know Him, “The Day of Final Settlement,” p. 359;
In Heavenly Places, “The Church and the World,” p. 309.

Lesson 4

The Flood

Sabbath Afternoon, April 16

[In the days of Noah] the human race yet retained much of its early vigor. But a few generations had passed since Adam had access to the tree which was to prolong life; and man's existence was still measured by centuries. Had that long-lived people, with their rare powers to plan and execute, devoted themselves to the service of God, they would have made their Creator's name a praise in the earth, and would have answered the purpose for which He gave them life. But they failed to do this. There were many giants, men of great stature and strength, renowned for wisdom, skillful in devising the most cunning and wonderful works; but their guilt in giving loose rein to iniquity was in proportion to their skill and mental ability.

God bestowed upon these antediluvians many and rich gifts; but they used His bounties to glorify themselves, and turned them into a curse by fixing their affections upon the gifts instead of the Giver. They employed the gold and silver, the precious stones and the choice wood, in the construction of habitations for themselves, and endeavored to excel one another in beautifying their dwellings with the most skillful workmanship. They sought only to gratify the desires of their own proud hearts, and reveled in scenes of pleasure and wickedness. Not desiring to retain God in their knowledge, they soon came to deny His existence. They adored nature in place of the God of nature. They glorified human genius, worshiped the works of their own hands, and taught their children to bow down to graven images.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 90, 91.

Of the antediluvians we read, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . And God said unto Noah, The end of

all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth” (Genesis 6:5, 13).

God warned the inhabitants of the old world of what He purposed to do in cleansing the earth of its impurity. But they laughed to scorn what they regarded as a superstitious prediction. They mocked at Noah’s warning of a coming flood. When Christ was upon the earth He gave warning of what was coming upon Jerusalem because the people had rejected truth, despising the messages that God had sent. But His warning was unheeded.

The Lord has sent us, by His ambassadors, messages of warning, declaring that the end of all things is at hand. Some will listen to these warnings, but by the vast majority they will be disregarded.

Thus will it be when Christ comes. Farmers, merchants, lawyers, tradesmen, will be wholly engrossed in business, and upon them the day of the Lord will come as a snare.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 343.

Sunday, April 17: Preparation for the Flood

More than one hundred years before the Flood the Lord sent an angel to faithful Noah to make known to him that He would no longer have mercy upon the corrupt race. But He would not have them ignorant of His design. He would instruct Noah and make him a faithful preacher to warn the world of its coming destruction, that the inhabitants of the earth might be left without excuse. Noah was to preach to the people, and also to prepare an ark as God should direct him for the saving of himself and family. He was not only to preach, but his example in building the ark was to convince all that he believed what he preached.

Noah and his family were not alone in fearing and obeying God. But Noah was the most pious and holy of any upon the earth, and was the one whose life God preserved to carry out His will in building the ark and warning the world of its coming doom.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 62, 63.

Noah stood like a rock amid the tempest. He was surrounded by every species of wickedness and moral corruption; but amid popular contempt and ridicule, amid universal wickedness and disobedience, he distinguished himself by his holy integrity and unwavering faithfulness. While the world around him were disregarding God, and were indulging in all manner of extravagant dissipation which led to violence and crimes of every kind, the faithful preacher of righteousness declared to that generation that a flood of water was to deluge the world because of the unsurpassed wickedness of its inhabitants. He warned them to repent and believe, and find refuge in the ark. . . .

. . . A power attended his words; for it was the voice of God to man through His servant. Connection with God made him strong in the strength of infinite power, while for one hundred and twenty years his solemn warning voice fell upon the ears of the men of that generation in regard to events, which, so far as human wisdom could judge, seemed impossible. . . . How simple and childlike, amid the unbelief of a scoffing world, was the faith of Noah. . . . He gave to the world an example of believing just what God said.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 322.

It is a fearful thing to treat lightly the truth which has convinced our understanding and touched our hearts. We cannot with impunity reject the warnings which God in mercy sends us. A message was sent from heaven to the world in Noah's day, and the salvation of men depended upon the manner in which they treated that message. Because they rejected the warning, the Spirit of God was withdrawn from the sinful race, and they perished in the waters of the flood. . . . Looking down to the last days, the same infinite power declares, concerning those who "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." As they reject the teachings of His Word, God withdraws His Spirit, and leaves them to the deceptions which they love.—*Early Writings*, p. 45.

Monday, April 18: The Event of the Flood

The Bible record is in harmony with itself and with the teaching of nature. Of the first day employed in the work of creation is given the record, "The evening and the morning were the first day." Genesis 1:5. And the same in substance is said of each of the first six days of creation week. Each of these periods Inspiration declares to have been a day consisting of evening and morning, like every other day since that time. In regard to the work of creation itself the divine testimony is, "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:9. . . .

. . . Before the Flood the development of vegetable and animal life was immeasurably superior to that which has since been known. At the Flood the surface of the earth was broken up, marked changes took place, and in the re-formation of the earth's crust were preserved many evidences of the life previously existing. The vast forests buried in the earth at the time of the Flood, and since changed to coal, form the extensive coal fields, and yield the supplies of oil that minister to our comfort and convenience today. These things, as they are brought to light, are so many witnesses mutely testifying to the truth of the word of God.—*Education*, p. 129.

God's love for the world was not manifest because He sent His Son, but because He loved the world He sent His Son into the world that divinity clothed with humanity might touch humanity, while divinity lays hold of divinity. Though sin had produced a gulf between man and his God, a divine benevolence provided a plan to bridge that gulf. And what material did He use? A part of Himself. The brightness of the Father's glory came to a world all seared and marred with the curse, and in His own divine character, in His own divine body, bridged the gulf. . . . The windows of heaven were opened and the showers of heavenly grace in healing streams came to our benighted world.—*Our High Calling*, p. 12.

There is need that much time be spent in secret prayer, in close communion with God. Thus only can victories be won. Eternal vigilance is the price of safety.

The Lord's covenant is with His saints. Everyone is to discern his weak points of character and guard against them with vigor. Those who have

been buried with Christ in baptism, and been raised in the likeness of His resurrection, have pledged themselves to live in newness of life. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” Colossians 3:1-4.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 258.

Tuesday, April 19: The End of the Flood

As the violence of the storm increased, trees, buildings, rocks, and earth were hurled in every direction. The terror of man and beast was beyond description. Above the roar of the tempest was heard the wailing of a people that had despised the authority of God. Satan himself, who was compelled to remain in the midst of the warring elements, feared for his own existence. . . . In that terrible hour [the people] saw that the transgression of God's law had caused their ruin. Yet while, through fear of punishment, they acknowledged their sin, they felt no true contrition, no abhorrence of evil. They would have returned to their defiance of Heaven, had the judgment been removed. So when God's judgments shall fall upon the earth before its deluge by fire, the impenitent will know just where and what their sin is—the despising of His holy law. Yet they will have no more true repentance than did the old-world sinners. . . .

Love, no less than justice, demanded that God's judgments should put a check on sin. The avenging waters swept over the last retreat, and the despisers of God perished in the black depths. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 99–101.

The waters had been fifteen cubits above the highest mountains. The Lord remembered Noah, and as the waters decreased, he caused the ark to rest upon the top of a cluster of mountains, which God in his power had preserved and made them to stand fast all through that violent storm. These mountains were but a little distance apart, and the ark moved about and rested upon one, then another of these mountains, and was no more driven upon the boundless ocean. This gave great relief to Noah and all within the ark. As the mountains and hills appeared they were in a broken, rough condition, and all around them appeared like a sea of roiled water or soft mud.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 77.

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Hebrews 11:7. While Noah was giving his warning message to the world, his works testified of his sincerity. It was thus that his faith was

perfected and made evident. He gave the world an example of believing just what God says. All that he possessed, he invested in the ark. As he began to construct that immense boat on dry ground, multitudes came from every direction to see the strange sight and to hear the earnest, fervent words of the singular preacher. Every blow struck upon the ark was a witness to the people.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 95.

Oh, how easy for us to forget God, while He never forgets us; He visits us with His mercies every hour.—*Our High Calling*, p. 314.

Wednesday, April 20—The Covenant: Part 1

In the joy of their release Noah did not forget Him by whose gracious care they had been preserved. His first act after leaving the ark was to build an altar and offer from every kind of clean beast and fowl a sacrifice, thus manifesting his gratitude to God for deliverance and his faith in Christ, the great sacrifice. This offering was pleasing to the Lord; and a blessing resulted, not only to the patriarch and his family, but to all who should live upon the earth. “The Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake.” . . . Here was a lesson for all succeeding generations. Noah had come forth upon a desolate earth, but before preparing a house for himself he built an altar to God. His stock of cattle was small, and had been preserved at great expense; yet he cheerfully gave a part to the Lord as an acknowledgment that all was His.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 105, 106.

Adam and Eve, at their creation, had a knowledge of the law of God; they were acquainted with its claims upon them; its precepts were written upon their hearts. When man fell by transgression the law was not changed, but a remedial system was established to bring him back to obedience. The promise of a Saviour was given, and sacrificial offerings pointing forward to the death of Christ as the great sin offering were established. . . .

Adam taught his descendants the law of God, and it was handed down from father to son through successive generations. But notwithstanding the gracious provision for man’s redemption, there were few who accepted it and rendered obedience. By transgression the world became so vile that it was necessary to cleanse it by the Flood from its corruption. The law was preserved by Noah and his family, and Noah taught his descendants the Ten Commandments. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 363.

As Noah looked upon the powerful beasts of prey that came forth with him from the ark, he feared that his family, numbering only eight persons, would be destroyed by them. But the Lord sent an angel to His servant with the assuring message: “The fear of you and the dread of you shall be

upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.” Before this time God had given man no permission to eat animal food; He intended that the race should subsist wholly upon the productions of the earth; but now that every green thing had been destroyed, He allowed them to eat the flesh of the clean beasts that had been preserved in the ark.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 107.

Thursday, April 21—The Covenant: Part 2

It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties and continues her motion round the sun. The hand of God guides the planets and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. It is through His power that summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, day and night follow each other in their regular succession. It is by His word that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves appear and the flowers bloom. Every good thing we have, each ray of sunshine and shower of rain, every morsel of food, every moment of life, is a gift of love.

While we were yet unloving and unlovely in character, “hateful, and hating one another,” our heavenly Father had mercy on us. “After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” Titus 3:3-5. His love received, will make us, in like manner, kind and tender, not merely toward those who please us, but to the most faulty and erring and sinful.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 74, 75.

As we look upon this bow, the seal and sign of God’s promise to man, that the tempest of His wrath should no more desolate our world by the waters of a flood, we contemplate that other than finite eyes are looking upon this glorious sight. Angels rejoice as they gaze upon this precious token of God’s love to man. The world’s Redeemer looks upon it; for it was through His instrumentality that this bow was made to appear in the heavens, as a token or covenant of promise to man. God Himself looks upon the bow in the clouds, and remembers His everlasting covenant between Himself and man. . . . The bow represents Christ’s love which encircles the earth, and reaches unto the highest heavens, connecting men with God, and linking earth with heaven.

As we gaze upon the beautiful sight, we may be joyful in God, assured that He Himself is looking upon this token of His covenant, and that as He looks upon it He remembers the children of earth, to whom it was given. Their afflictions, perils, and trials are not hidden from Him. We may rejoice in hope, for the bow of God’s covenant is over us. He never will

forget the children of His care. How difficult for the mind of finite man to take in the peculiar love and tenderness of God, and His matchless condescension when He said, “I will look upon the bow in the cloud, and remember thee.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 314.

We are to send our petitions through the darkest clouds that Satan may cast over us, and let our faith pierce to the throne of God encircled by the rainbow of promise, the assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness neither shadow of turning. . . .

We are to come before the mercy seat with reverence, calling up to our mind the promises that God has given, contemplating the goodness of God, and offering up thankful praises for His unchangeable love. We are not to trust in our finite prayers, but in the word of our heavenly Father, in His assurance of His love for us.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 125.

Friday, April 22: For Further Reading

Spiritual Gifts, “Disguised Infidelity,” vol. 3, pp. 94, 95;
The Upward Look, “Time for Action,” p. 88.

Lesson 5

All Nations and Babel

Sabbath Afternoon, April 23

Some of the descendants of Noah soon began to apostatize. A portion followed the example of Noah and obeyed God's commandments; others were unbelieving and rebellious, and even these did not believe alike in regard to the Flood. Some disbelieved in the existence of God, and in their own minds accounted for the Flood from natural causes. Others believed that God existed and that He destroyed the antediluvian race by a flood; and their feelings, like Cain's, rose in rebellion against God because He destroyed the people from the earth and cursed the earth the third time by a flood.

Those who were enemies of God felt daily reproved by the righteous conversation and godly lives of those who loved, obeyed, and exalted God. The unbelieving consulted among themselves and agreed to separate from the faithful, whose righteous lives were a continual restraint upon their wicked course. They journeyed a distance from them and selected a large plain wherein to dwell. They built them a city, and then conceived the idea of building a large tower to reach unto the clouds, that they might dwell together in the city and tower, and be no more scattered.—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 72.

All human ambition, all boasting, is to be laid in the dust. Self, sinful self, is to be abased, not exalted. By holiness in the daily life we are to reveal Christ to those around us. Corrupt human nature is to be subdued, not exalted. Thus only can we become pure and undefiled. We are to be humble, faithful men and women. . . .

. . . A faithful record is kept of all the acts of the children of men. Nothing can be concealed from the eye of the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity. Some make Christ ashamed of them by their devising

and planning and scheming. God does not approve of their conduct, for the Lord Jesus is dishonored by their spirit and their works. . . .

The instruction that the Lord has given concerning His work points out the right way. God's plans and God's thoughts are as much higher than man's plans and man's thoughts as the heavens are higher than the earth. God's voice is to be heard, His wisdom is to guide. He has outlined His plan in His word and in the testimonies that He has sent to His people. That work only which is carried on in accordance with the principles of His word will stand fast forever.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 234, 235.

With untold love our God has loved us, and our love awakens toward Him as we comprehend something of the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that passeth knowledge. By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 76, 77.

Sunday, April 24: The Curse of Ham

To repopulate the desolate earth, which the Flood had so lately swept from its moral corruption, God had preserved but one family, the household of Noah, to whom He had declared, "Thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation." Genesis 7:1. Yet in the three sons of Noah was speedily developed the same great distinction seen in the world before the Flood. In Shem, Ham, and Japheth, who were to be the founders of the human race, was foreshadowed the character of their posterity.

Noah, speaking by divine inspiration, foretold the history of the three great races to spring from these fathers of mankind. Tracing the descendants of Ham, through the son rather than the father, he declared, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." The unnatural crime of Ham declared that filial reverence had long before been cast from his soul, and it revealed the impiety and vileness of his character. These evil characteristics were perpetuated in Canaan and his posterity, whose continued guilt called upon them the judgments of God. .

..

The prophecy of Noah was no arbitrary denunciation of wrath or declaration of favor. It did not fix the character and destiny of his sons. But it showed what would be the result of the course of life they had severally chosen and the character they had developed. It was an expression of God's purpose toward them and their posterity in view of their own character and conduct. As a rule, children inherit the dispositions and tendencies of their parents, and imitate their example; so that the sins of the parents are practiced by the children from generation to generation. Thus the vileness and irreverence of Ham were reproduced in his posterity, bringing a curse upon them for many generations. "One sinner destroyeth much good." Ecclesiastes 9:18.

On the other hand, how richly rewarded was Shem's respect for his father; and what an illustrious line of holy men appears in his posterity! "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright," "and his seed is blessed." Psalm 37:18, 26.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 117, 118.

Repentance, as well as forgiveness, is the gift of God through Christ. It is through the influence of the Holy Spirit that we are convicted of sin,

and feel our need of pardon. None but the contrite are forgiven; but it is the grace of God that makes the heart penitent. He is acquainted with all our weaknesses and infirmities, and He will help us.

Some who come to God by repentance and confession, and even believe that their sins are forgiven, still fail of claiming, as they should, the promises of God. They do not see that Jesus is an ever-present Saviour; and they are not ready to commit the keeping of their souls to Him, relying upon Him to perfect the work of grace begun in their hearts. . . . There are no victories in this kind of faith. Such persons toil to no purpose; their souls are in continual bondage, and they find no rest until their burdens are laid at the feet of Jesus.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 353.

Monday, April 25: The Genesis Genealogy

When consideration is given to man's opportunities for research; how brief his life; how limited his sphere of action; how restricted his vision; how frequent and how great the errors in his conclusions, especially as concerns the events thought to antedate Bible history; how often the supposed deductions of science are revised or cast aside; with what readiness the assumed period of the earth's development is from time to time increased or diminished by millions of years; and how the theories advanced by different scientists conflict with one another,—considering all this, shall we, for the privilege of tracing our descent from germs and mollusks and apes, consent to cast away that statement of Holy Writ, so grand in its simplicity, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him”? Genesis 1:27. Shall we reject that genealogical record,—prouder than any treasured in the courts of kings,—“which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God”? Luke 3:38.

Rightly understood, both the revelations of science and the experiences of life are in harmony with the testimony of Scripture to the constant working of God.—*Education*, p. 130.

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.

In words of matchless beauty and tenderness, the apostle Paul set before the sages of Athens the divine purpose in the creation and distribution of races and nations. “God that made the world and all things therein,” declared the apostle, “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him.” Acts 17:24-27. —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 499, 500.

The Bible presents a boundless field for the imagination, as much higher and more ennobling in character than the superficial creations of the unsanctified intellect as the heavens are higher than the earth. The inspired history of our race is placed in the hands of every individual. All may now begin their research. They may become acquainted with our first parents as they stood in Eden, in holy innocence, enjoying communion with God and sinless angels. They may trace the introduction of sin and its results upon the race, and follow, step by step, down the track of sacred history, as it records the disobedience and impenitence of man and the just retribution for sin.—*Messages to Young People*, p. 255.

Tuesday, April 26: One Language

No sooner was the earth repopled than men resumed their hostility to God and heaven. They transmitted their enmity to their posterity, as though the art and device of misleading men, and causing them to continue the unnatural warfare, was a sacred legacy.

This confederacy was born of rebellion against God. The dwellers on the plain of Shinar established their kingdom for self-exaltation, not for the glory of God. Had they succeeded, a mighty power would have borne sway, banishing righteousness, and inaugurating a new religion. The world would have been demoralized. The mixture of religious ideas with erroneous theories would have resulted in closing the door to peace, happiness, and security. These suppositions, erroneous theories, carried out and perfected, would have directed minds from allegiance to the divine statutes, and the law of Jehovah would have been ignored and forgotten. Determined men, inspired and urged on by the first great rebel, would have resisted any interference with their plans or their evil course. In the place of the divine precepts they would have substituted laws framed in accordance with the desires of their selfish hearts, in order that they might carry out their purposes.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 1091, 1092.

[The enemies of God] reasoned that they would secure themselves in case of another flood, for they would build their tower to a much greater height than the waters prevailed in the time of the Flood, and all the world would honor them, and they would be as gods and rule over the people. This tower was calculated to exalt its builders, and was designed to turn the attention of others who should live upon the earth from God to join with them in their idolatry. Before the work of building was accomplished, people dwelt in the tower. Rooms were splendidly furnished, decorated, and devoted to their idols. Those who did not believe in God imagined if their tower could reach unto the clouds, they would be able to discover reasons for the Flood.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 72, 73.

In the Word of God are represented two contending parties that influence and control human agencies in our world. Constantly these parties are working with every human being. Those who are under God's control and who are influenced by the heavenly angels, will be able to discern the crafty workings of the unseen powers of darkness. Those who desire to be in harmony with the heavenly agencies should be intensely in earnest to do God's will. They must give no place whatever to Satan and his angels.

But unless we are constantly on guard, we shall be overcome by the enemy. Although a solemn revelation of God's will concerning us has been revealed to all, yet a knowledge of His will does not set aside the necessity of offering earnest supplications to Him for help, and of diligently seeking to cooperate with Him in answering the prayers offered. He accomplishes His purposes through human instrumentalities.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1119.

Wednesday, April 27: “Let Us Go Down”

[Christ] came to this world in human form, to live a man amongst men. He assumed the liabilities of human nature, to be proved and tried. In His humanity He was a partaker of the divine nature. In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God. . . . While the Son of a human being, He became the Son of God in a new sense. Thus He stood in our world—the Son of God, yet allied by birth to the human race.

Christ came in human form to show the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds and of the fallen world that ample provision has been made to enable human beings to live in loyalty to their Creator. He endured the temptations that Satan was permitted to bring against Him, and resisted all his assaults. He was sorely afflicted, and hard beset, but God did not leave Him without recognition. When He was baptized of John in Jordan, as He came up out of the water, the Spirit of God, like a dove of burnished gold, descended upon Him, and a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 226, 227.

God sees the sinner. . . . David was a repentant man, and although he confessed and hated his sin, he could not forget it.

He exclaimed, “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me. . . . Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day” [Psalm 139:7-12].

God is everywhere. He sees, He knows, all things, and understands the intents and purposes of the heart. It is in vain that an attempt should be made to conceal sin from His notice. He saw our first parents in Eden. He saw Cain when he raised his hand to kill Abel. He saw the sins of the inhabitants of the old world, and numbered their days and punished them with a flood. He saw the sins of His own covenant people, the Jews, when they plotted against the life of the Son of God.—*Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, p. 89.

There are tower builders in our time. Infidels construct their theories from the supposed deductions of science, and reject the revealed word of God. . . . In the professedly Christian world many turn away from the plain teachings of the Bible and build up a creed from human speculations and pleasing fables, and they point to their tower as a way to climb up to heaven. . . .

The time of God's investigation is at hand. The Most High will come down to see that which the children of men have builded. His sovereign power will be revealed; the works of human pride will be laid low.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 42.

Thursday, April 28: The Redemption of the Exile

[The enemies of God] exalted themselves against God. But He would not permit them to complete their work. They had built their tower to a lofty height when the Lord sent two angels to confound them in their work. Men had been appointed for the purpose of receiving word from the workmen at the top of the tower, calling for material for their work, which the first would communicate to the second, and he to the third, until the word reached those on the ground. As the word was passing from one to another in its descent, the angels confounded their language, and when the word reached the workmen upon the ground, material was called for which had not been required. And after the laborious process of getting the material to the workmen at the top of the tower, it was not that which they wished for. Disappointed and enraged, they reproached those whom they supposed were at fault.

After this there was no harmony in their work. Angry with one another, and unable to account for the misunderstanding and strange words among them, they left the work and separated from each other and scattered abroad in [the] earth. Up to this time men had spoken but one language. Lightning from heaven, as a token of God's wrath, broke off the top of their tower, casting it to the ground. Thus God would show to rebellious man that He is supreme.—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 73.

In mercy [God] confounded their speech, thus putting a check on their purposes of rebellion. God bears long with the perversity of men, giving them ample opportunity for repentance; but He marks all their devices to resist the authority of His just and holy law. From time to time the unseen hand that holds the scepter of government is stretched out to restrain iniquity. Unmistakable evidence is given that the Creator of the universe, the One infinite in wisdom and love and truth, is the Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, and that none can with impunity defy His power.

The schemes of the Babel builders ended in shame and defeat. The monument to their pride became the memorial of their folly. Yet men are continually pursuing the same course—depending upon self, and rejecting God's law. It is the principle that Satan tried to carry out in heaven; the

same that governed Cain in presenting his offering.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 123.

[God] is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple courts, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 369, 370.

Friday, April 29: For Further Reading

The Ministry of Healing, “God’s Plans the Best,” pp. 473, 474;
Patriarchs and Prophets, “The Tower of Babel,” pp. 117–124.

Lesson 6

The Roots of Abraham

Sabbath Afternoon, April 30

God selected Abraham as His messenger through whom to communicate light to the world. The word of God came to him, not with the presentation of flattering prospects in this life of large salary, of great appreciation and worldly honor. “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee” (Genesis 12:1), was the divine message to Abraham. The patriarch obeyed. . . . He forsook his country, his home, his relatives, and all pleasant associations connected with his early life, to become a pilgrim and a stranger.

Abraham . . . might have reasoned and questioned the purposes of God in this. But he showed that he had perfect confidence that God was leading him; he did not question whether it was a fertile, pleasant country or whether or not he should have ease. He went at God’s bidding. This is a lesson to every one of us.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 112.

Before God can use him, Abraham must be separated from his former associations, that he may not be controlled by human influence or rely upon human aid. Now that he has become connected with God, this man must henceforth dwell among strangers. His character must be peculiar, differing from all the world. He could not even explain his course of action so as to be understood by his friends, for they were idolaters. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned; therefore his motives and his actions were beyond the comprehension of his kindred and friends.

Abraham’s unquestioning obedience was one of the most striking instances of faith and reliance upon God to be found in the Sacred Record. With only the naked promise that his descendants should possess Canaan, without the least outward evidence, he followed on where God should lead, fully and sincerely complying with the conditions on his part, and

confident that the Lord would faithfully perform His word. The patriarch went wherever God indicated his duty; he passed through wildernesses without terror; he went among idolatrous nations, with the one thought: “God has spoken; I am obeying His voice; He will guide, He will protect me.”

Just such faith and confidence as Abraham had the messengers of God need today. But many whom the Lord could use will not move onward, hearing and obeying the one Voice above all others. . . . The Lord would do much more for His servants if they were wholly consecrated to Him, esteeming His service above the ties of kindred and all other earthly associations.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 523, 524.

When called to become a sower of the seed of truth, Abraham . . . “went out, not knowing whither he went.” Hebrews 11:8. So to the apostle Paul, praying in the temple at Jerusalem, came the message from God, “Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.” Acts 22:21. So those who are called to unite with Christ must leave all, in order to follow Him. Old associations must be broken up, plans of life relinquished, earthly hopes surrendered. In toil and tears, in solitude, and through sacrifice, must the seed be sown.—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 36, 37.

Sunday, May 1: Abraham's Departure

After the dispersion from Babel idolatry again became well-nigh universal, and the Lord finally left the hardened transgressors to follow their evil ways, while He chose Abraham, of the line of Shem, and made him the keeper of His law for future generations. Abraham had grown up in the midst of superstition and heathenism. Even his father's household, by whom the knowledge of God had been preserved, were yielding to the seductive influences surrounding them, and they "served other gods" than Jehovah. But the true faith was not to become extinct. God has ever preserved a remnant to serve Him. Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, in unbroken line, had preserved from age to age the precious revealings of His will. The son of Terah became the inheritor of this holy trust. Idolatry invited him on every side, but in vain. Faithful among the faithless, uncorrupted by the prevailing apostasy, he steadfastly adhered to the worship of the one true God. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth." Psalm 145:18. He communicated His will to Abraham, and gave him a distinct knowledge of the requirements of His law and of the salvation that would be accomplished through Christ. . . .

It was no light test that was thus brought upon Abraham, no small sacrifice that was required of him. There were strong ties to bind him to his country, his kindred, and his home. But he did not hesitate to obey the call. He had no question to ask concerning the land of promise—whether the soil was fertile and the climate healthful; whether the country afforded agreeable surroundings and would afford opportunities for amassing wealth. God has spoken, and His servant must obey; the happiest place on earth for him was the place where God would have him to be.

Many are still tested as was Abraham. They do not hear the voice of God speaking directly from the heavens, but He calls them by the teachings of His word and the events of His providence. They may be required to abandon a career that promises wealth and honor, to leave congenial and profitable associations and separate from kindred, to enter upon what appears to be only a path of self-denial, hardship, and sacrifice. God has a work for them to do; but a life of ease and the influence of

friends and kindred would hinder the development of the very traits essential for its accomplishment. He calls them away from human influences and aid, and leads them to feel the need of His help, and to depend upon Him alone, that He may reveal Himself to them. Who is ready at the call of Providence to renounce cherished plans and familiar associations? Who will accept new duties and enter untried fields, doing God's work with firm and willing heart, for Christ's sake counting his losses gain? He who will do this has the faith of Abraham, and will share with him that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Corinthians 4:17.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 125–127.

Monday, May 2: The Temptation of Egypt

Abraham continued to journey southward, and again his faith was tested. The heavens withheld their rain, the brooks ceased to flow in the valleys, and the grass withered on the plains. The flocks and herds found no pasture, and starvation threatened the whole encampment. . . . All were eagerly watching to see what Abraham would do, as trouble after trouble came upon him. So long as his confidence appeared unshaken, they felt that there was hope; they were assured that God was his Friend, and that He was still guiding him. . . .

. . . With earnest prayer he considered how to preserve the life of his people and his flocks, but he would not allow circumstances to shake his faith in God's word. To escape the famine he went down into Egypt. He did not forsake Canaan, or in his extremity turn back to the Chaldean land from which he came, where there was no scarcity of bread; but he sought a temporary refuge as near as possible to the Land of Promise, intending shortly to return where God had placed him.

The Lord in His providence had brought this trial upon Abraham to teach him lessons of submission, patience, and faith—lessons that were to be placed on record for the benefit of all who should afterward be called to endure affliction. God leads His children by a way that they know not, but He does not forget or cast off those who put their trust in Him. . . . The very trials that task our faith most severely and make it seem that God has forsaken us, are to lead us closer to Christ, that we may lay all our burdens at His feet and experience the peace which He will give us in exchange. . . .

During his stay in Egypt, Abraham gave evidence that he was not free from human weakness and imperfection. In concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, he betrayed a distrust of the divine care, a lack of that lofty faith and courage so often and nobly exemplified in his life. Sarah was fair to look upon, and he doubted not that the dusky Egyptians would covet the beautiful stranger, and that in order to secure her, they would not scruple to slay her husband. He reasoned that he was not guilty of falsehood in representing Sarah as his sister, for she was the daughter of his father, though not of his mother. But this concealment of the real

relation between them was deception. No deviation from strict integrity can meet God's approval. Through Abraham's lack of faith, Sarah was placed in great peril. The king of Egypt, being informed of her beauty, caused her to be taken to his palace, intending to make her his wife. But the Lord, in His great mercy, protected Sarah by sending judgments upon the royal household. By this means the monarch learned the truth in the matter, and, indignant at the deception practiced upon him, he reproved Abraham and restored to him his wife.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 128–130.

Tuesday, May 3: Abram and Lot

Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly. Genesis 13:12, 13.

The most fertile region in all Palestine was the Jordan valley. . . . There were cities also, wealthy and beautiful, inviting to profitable traffic in their crowded marts. Dazzled with visions of worldly gain, Lot overlooked the moral and spiritual evils that would be encountered there. . . . He “chose him all the plain of Jordan,” and “pitched his tent toward Sodom.” How little did he foresee the terrible results of that selfish choice!

Lot chose Sodom for his home because he saw that there were advantages to be gained there from a worldly point of view. But after he had established himself, and grown rich in earthly treasure, he was convinced that he had made a mistake in not taking into consideration the moral standing of the community in which he was to make his home.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 48.

The Holy Scriptures give us marked examples of the exercise of true courtesy. Abraham was a man of God. When he pitched his tent he at once erected his altar for sacrifice and invited God to abide with him. Abraham was a courteous man. His life is not marred with selfishness, so hateful in any character and so offensive in the sight of God. Witness his conduct when about to separate from Lot. Though Lot was his nephew, and much younger than himself, and the first choice of the land belonged to Abraham, courtesy led him to forgo his right, and permit Lot to select for himself that part of the country which seemed to him most desirable. . . . Abraham knew what genuine politeness was and what was due from man to his fellow men.

We should be self-forgetful, ever . . . watching for opportunities to cheer others and lighten and relieve their sorrows and burdens by acts of tender kindness and little deeds of love. These thoughtful courtesies, that, commencing in our families, extend outside the family circle, help make up the sum of life’s happiness.—*My Life Today*, p. 192.

If we have Christ abiding with us, we shall be Christians at home as well as abroad. He who is a Christian will have kind words for his relatives and associates. He will be kind, courteous, loving, sympathetic, and will be educating himself for an abode with the family above. If he is a member of the royal family, he will represent the kingdom to which he is going. He will speak with gentleness to his children, for he will realize that they too are heirs of God, members of the heavenly court. Among the children of God no spirit of harshness dwells.—*My Life Today*, p. 196.

Wednesday, May 4: The Babel Coalition

Abraham, dwelling in peace in the oak groves at Mamre, learned from one of the fugitives the story of the battle and the calamity that had befallen his nephew. He had cherished no unkind memory of Lot's ingratitude. All his affection for him was awakened, and he determined that he should be rescued. Seeking, first of all, divine counsel, Abraham prepared for war. . . . His attack, so vigorous and unexpected, resulted in speedy victory. The king of Elam was slain and his panic-stricken forces were utterly routed. Lot and his family, with all the prisoners and their goods, were recovered, and a rich booty fell into the hands of the victors. To Abraham, under God, the triumph was due. The worshiper of Jehovah had not only rendered a great service to the country, but had proved himself a man of valor. It was seen that righteousness is not cowardice, and that Abraham's religion made him courageous in maintaining the right and defending the oppressed. His heroic act gave him a widespread influence among the surrounding tribes.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 135.

At the time of Lot's removal to Sodom, corruption had not become universal, and God in His mercy permitted rays of light to shine amid the moral darkness. When Abraham rescued the captives from the Elamites, the attention of the people was called to the true faith. Abraham was not a stranger to the people of Sodom, and his worship of the unseen God had been a matter of ridicule among them; but his victory over greatly superior forces, and his magnanimous disposition of the prisoners and spoil, excited wonder and admiration. While his skill and valor were extolled, none could avoid the conviction that a divine power had made him conqueror. And his noble and unselfish spirit, so foreign to the self-seeking inhabitants of Sodom, was another evidence of the superiority of the religion which he had honored by his courage and fidelity.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 157.

God positively enjoins upon all His followers a duty to bless others with their influence and means, and to seek that wisdom of Him which

will enable them to do all in their power to elevate the thoughts and affections of those who come within their influence. . . .

Every act of our lives affects others for good or evil. Our influence is tending upward or downward; it is felt, acted upon, and to a greater or less degree reproduced by others. If by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same beneficial influence upon others, and thus hundreds and thousands are affected by our unconscious influence. If we by acts strengthen or force into activity the evil powers possessed by those around us, we share their sin, and will have to render an account for the good we might have done them and did not do, because we made not God our strength, our guide, our counselor.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 132, 133.

Thursday, May 5: The Tithe of Melchizedek

God has never left Himself without witness on the earth. At one time Melchisedek represented the Lord Jesus Christ in person, to reveal the truth of heaven, and perpetuate the law of God.

It was Christ that spoke through Melchisedek, the priest of the most high God. Melchisedek was not Christ, but he was the voice of God in the world, the representative of the Father. And all through the generations of the past, Christ has spoken; Christ has led His people, and has been the light of the world. When God chose Abraham as a representative of His truth, He took him out of his country, and away from his kindred, and set him apart. He desired to mold him after His own model. He desired to teach him according to His own plan.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 1092, 1093.

In the Hebrew economy one tenth of the income of the people was set apart to support the public worship of God. . . .

But the tithing system did not originate with the Hebrews. From the earliest times the Lord claimed a tithe as His, and this claim was recognized and honored. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. Genesis 14:20. Jacob, when at Bethel, an exile and a wanderer, promised the Lord, “Of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.” Genesis 28:22. As the Israelites were about to be established as a nation, the law of tithing was reaffirmed as one of the divinely ordained statutes upon obedience to which their prosperity depended.

The system of tithes and offerings was intended to impress the minds of men with a great truth—that God is the source of every blessing to His creatures, and that to Him man’s gratitude is due for the good gifts of His providence.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 525.

Money is a blessing when those who use it consider that they are the Lord’s stewards, that they are handling the Lord’s capital, and must one day give account of their stewardship.

Does your account book reveal that you have dealt faithfully with your Lord? Are you poor? Then give your little. Have you been blessed with

abundance? Then be sure to lay aside that which the Lord registers as His own. . . . The neglect to confess Christ in your account books cuts you off from the great privilege of having your name registered in the Lamb's book of life.

Our heavenly Father teaches by His own example of beneficence. God gives to us regularly, freely, and abundantly. Every earthly blessing is from His hand. What if the Lord should cease to bestow His gifts upon us? What a cry of wretchedness, suffering, and want would go up from the earth! We need daily the unfailing flow of Jehovah's love and goodness.—*Our High Calling*, p. 192.

Friday, May 6: For Further Reading

My Life Today, “Hospitality,” p. 194;

Counsels on Stewardship, “A Test of Loyalty,” pp. 65, 66.

Lesson 7

The Covenant With Abraham

Sabbath Afternoon, May 7

In a vision of the night the divine Voice was again heard. “Fear not, Abram,” were the words of the Prince of princes; “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” But his mind was so oppressed by forebodings that he could not now grasp the promise with unquestioning confidence as heretofore. He prayed for some tangible evidence that it would be fulfilled. And how was the covenant promise to be realized, while the gift of a son was withheld? “What wilt thou give me,” he said, “seeing I go childless?” “And, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.” He proposed to make his trusty servant Eliezer his son by adoption, and the inheritor of his possessions. But he was assured that a child of his own was to be his heir. Then he was led outside his tent, and told to look up to the unnumbered stars glittering in the heavens; and as he did so, the words were spoken, “So shall thy seed be.” “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” Romans 4:3.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 136, 137.

When Abraham was nearly one hundred years old, the promise of a son was repeated to him, with the assurance that the future heir should be the child of Sarah. But Abraham did not yet understand the promise. His mind at once turned to Ishmael, clinging to the belief that through him God’s gracious purposes were to be accomplished. In his affection for his son he exclaimed, “O that Ishmael might live before Thee!” Again the promise was given, in words that could not be mistaken: “Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 146.

God conferred great honor upon Abraham. Angels of heaven walked and talked with him as friend with friend. When judgments were about to be visited upon Sodom, the fact was not hidden from him, and he became

an intercessor with God for sinners. His interview with the angels presents also a beautiful example of hospitality.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 138.

The greatest victories gained for the cause of God are not the result of labored argument, ample facilities, wide influence, or abundance of means; they are gained in the audience chamber with God, when with earnest, agonizing faith men lay hold upon the mighty arm of power.

True faith and true prayer—how strong they are! They are as two arms by which the human suppliant lays hold upon the power of Infinite Love. Faith is trusting in God,—believing that He loves us, and knows what is for our best good. Thus, instead of our own way, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness. Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership, and accepts its blessings.—*Gospel Workers*, p. 259.

Sunday, May 8: The Faith of Abraham

To the curious crowd pressing about Jesus there was imparted no vital power. But the suffering woman who touched Him in faith received healing. So in spiritual things does the casual contact differ from the touch of faith. To believe in Christ merely as the Saviour of the world can never bring healing to the soul. The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere assent to the truth of the gospel. True faith is that which receives Christ as a personal Saviour. God gave His only-begotten Son, that I, by believing in Him, “should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. When I come to Christ, according to His word, I am to believe that I receive His saving grace. The life that I now live, I am to “live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which, through the grace of Christ, the soul becomes a conquering power.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 62.

The patriarch begged for some visible token as a confirmation of his faith and as an evidence to after-generations that God’s gracious purposes toward them would be accomplished. The Lord condescended to enter into a covenant with His servant, employing such forms as were customary among men for the ratification of a solemn engagement. By divine direction, Abraham sacrificed a heifer, a she-goat, and a ram, each three years old, dividing the bodies and laying the pieces a little distance apart. To these he added a turtledove and a young pigeon, which, however, were not divided. This being done, he reverently passed between the parts of the sacrifice, making a solemn vow to God of perpetual obedience. Watchful and steadfast, he remained beside the carcasses till the going down of the sun, to guard them from being defiled or devoured by birds of prey. About sunset he sank into a deep sleep; and, “lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him.” And the voice of God was heard, bidding him not to expect immediate possession of the Promised Land, and pointing forward to the sufferings of his posterity before their establishment in

Canaan. The plan of redemption was here opened to him, in the death of Christ, the great sacrifice, and His coming in glory. Abraham saw also the earth restored to its Eden beauty, to be given him for an everlasting possession, as the final and complete fulfillment of the promise.

As a pledge of this covenant of God with men, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, symbols of the divine presence, passed between the severed victims, totally consuming them. And again a voice was heard by Abraham, confirming the gift of the land of Canaan to his descendants, “from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 137.

Monday, May 9: Abraham's Doubts

Abraham had accepted without question the promise of a son, but he did not wait for God to fulfill His word in His own time and way. A delay was permitted, to test his faith in the power of God; but he failed to endure the trial. Thinking it impossible that a child should be given her in her old age, Sarah suggested, as a plan by which the divine purpose might be fulfilled, that one of her handmaidens should be taken by Abraham as a secondary wife. Polygamy had become so widespread that it had ceased to be regarded as a sin, but it was no less a violation of the law of God, and was fatal to the sacredness and peace of the family relation. Abraham's marriage with Hagar resulted in evil, not only to his own household, but to future generations.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 145.

God gives light to guide those who honestly desire light and truth; but it is not His purpose to remove all cause for questioning and doubt. He gives sufficient evidence to found faith upon, and then requires men to accept that evidence and exercise faith.

He who will study the Bible with a humble and teachable spirit will find it a sure guide, pointing out the way of life with unfailing accuracy. But what does your study of the Bible avail, brethren and sisters, unless you practice the truths it teaches? That holy book contains nothing that is nonessential; nothing is revealed that has not a bearing upon our actual lives. The deeper our love for Jesus, the more highly we shall regard that word as the voice of God directly to us.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 303.

You need not go in uncertainty and doubt. Satan is at hand to suggest a variety of doubts, but if you will open your eyes in faith you will find sufficient evidence for belief. But God will never remove from any man all causes for doubts. Those who love to dwell in the atmosphere of doubt and questioning unbelief can have the unenviable privilege. God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe; but he who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things which he cannot make plain to his finite understanding will be left in the cold, chilling

atmosphere of unbelief and questioning doubts, and will make shipwreck of faith. . . . Jesus never praised unbelief; He never commended doubts. He gave to His nation evidences of His Messiahship in the miracles He wrought, but there were some who considered it a virtue to doubt and who would reason these evidences away and find something in every good work to question and censure.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 232, 233.

Tuesday, May 10: The Sign of the Abrahamic Covenant

At this time the rite of circumcision was given to Abraham as “a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.” Romans 4:11. It was to be observed by the patriarch and his descendants as a token that they were devoted to the service of God and thus separated from idolaters, and that God accepted them as His peculiar treasure. By this rite they were pledged to fulfill, on their part, the conditions of the covenant made with Abraham. They were not to contract marriages with the heathen; for by so doing they would lose their reverence for God and His holy law; they would be tempted to engage in the sinful practices of other nations, and would be seduced into idolatry.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 138.

The faith that is unto salvation is not a casual faith, it is not the mere consent of the intellect, it is belief rooted in the heart, that embraces Christ as a personal Saviour, assured that He can save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. . . . This faith leads its possessor to place all the affections of the soul upon Christ; his understanding is under the control of the Holy Spirit, and his character is molded after the divine likeness. His faith is not a dead faith, but a faith that works by love, and leads him to behold the beauty of Christ, and to become assimilated to the divine character. [Deuteronomy 30:11-14 quoted.] “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (Deuteronomy 30:6).

It is God that circumcises the heart. The whole work is the Lord’s from the beginning to the end. The perishing sinner may say: “I am a lost sinner; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He says, ‘I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance’ (Mark 2:17). I am a sinner, and He died upon Calvary’s cross to save me. I need not remain a moment longer unsaved. He died and rose again for my justification, and He will save me now. I accept the forgiveness He has promised.”—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 391, 392.

When Abraham had been nearly twenty-five years in Canaan, the Lord appeared unto him, and said, “I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.” In awe, the patriarch fell upon his face, and the message continued: “Behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.” In token of the fulfillment of this covenant, his name, heretofore called Abram, was changed to Abraham, which signifies, “father of a great multitude.” Sarai’s name became Sarah—“princess;” for, said the divine Voice, “she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 137, 138.

Wednesday, May 11: The Son of Promise

In all ages, God has wrought through holy angels for the succor and deliverance of His people. Celestial beings have taken an active part in the affairs of men. They have appeared clothed in garments that shone as the lightning; they have come as men in the garb of wayfarers. Angels have appeared in human form to men of God. They have rested, as if weary, under the oaks at noon. They have accepted the hospitalities of human homes. They have acted as guides to benighted travelers. They have, with their own hands, kindled the fires at the altar. They have opened prison doors and set free the servants of the Lord. Clothed with the panoply of heaven, they came to roll away the stone from the Saviour's tomb.

In the form of men, angels are often in the assemblies of the righteous; and they visit the assemblies of the wicked, as they went to Sodom, to make a record of their deeds, to determine whether they have passed the boundary of God's forbearance. The Lord delights in mercy; and for the sake of a few who really serve Him, He restrains calamities and prolongs the tranquillity of multitudes.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 631, 632.

The privilege granted Abraham and Lot is not denied to us. By showing hospitality to God's children we, too, may receive His angels into our dwellings. Even in our day, angels in human form enter the homes of men and are entertained by them. And Christians who live in the light of God's countenance are always accompanied by unseen angels, and these holy beings leave behind them a blessing in our homes.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 342.

Christ says to His redeemed people, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matthew 25:34-36).

Prayers, exhortation, and talk are cheap fruits . . . but fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows, are genuine fruits, and grow naturally upon a good tree. . . .

When hearts sympathize with hearts burdened with discouragement and grief, when the hand dispenses to the needy, when the naked are clothed, the stranger made welcome to a seat at your fireside and to a place in your heart, angels are coming very near, and an answering strain is responded to in heaven. Every act, every deed of justice and mercy and benevolence, makes sweet music ring in heaven. . . .

Every merciful act done to the needy, the suffering, is counted as though it were done to Jesus Himself. When you succor the poor, sympathize with the afflicted and oppressed, and befriend the orphan, you bring yourselves into a closer relationship to Jesus.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 335.

Thursday, May 12: Lot in Sodom

Two of the heavenly messengers departed, leaving Abraham alone with Him whom he now knew to be the Son of God. And the man of faith pleaded for the inhabitants of Sodom. Once he had saved them by his sword, now he endeavored to save them by prayer. Lot and his household were still dwellers there; and the unselfish love that prompted Abraham to their rescue from the Elamites, now sought to save them, if it were God's will, from the storm of divine judgment.

With deep reverence and humility he urged his plea: "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." There was no self-confidence, no boasting of his own righteousness. He did not claim favor on the ground of his obedience, or of the sacrifices he had made in doing God's will. Himself a sinner, he pleaded in the sinner's behalf. Such a spirit all who approach God should possess. Yet Abraham manifested the confidence of a child pleading with a loved father. He came close to the heavenly Messenger, and fervently urged his petition.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 139.

How was it with the rebellious inhabitants of the antediluvian world? After rejecting the message of Noah, they plunged into sin with greater abandon than ever before, and doubled the enormity of their corrupting practices. Those who refuse to reform by accepting Christ find nothing reformatory in sin; their minds are set to carry their spirit of revolt, and they are not, and never will be, forced to submission. The judgment which God brought upon the antediluvian world declared it incurable. The destruction of Sodom proclaimed the inhabitants of the most beautiful country in the world incorrigible in sin. The fire and brimstone from heaven consumed everything except Lot, his wife, and two daughters. The wife, looking back in disregard of God's command, became a pillar of salt.—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 75.

In mercy to the world, God blotted out its wicked inhabitants in Noah's time. In mercy He destroyed the corrupt dwellers in Sodom. Through the deceptive power of Satan the workers of iniquity obtain sympathy and

admiration, and are thus constantly leading others to rebellion. It was so in Cain's and in Noah's day, and in the time of Abraham and Lot; it is so in our time. It is in mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace. . . .

. . . Since it is impossible for God, consistently with His justice and mercy, to save the sinner in his sins, He deprives him of the existence which his transgressions have forfeited and of which he has proved himself unworthy. Says an inspired writer: "Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." And another declares: "They shall be as though they had not been." Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16. Covered with infamy, they sink into hopeless, eternal oblivion.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 543–545.

Friday, May 13: For Further Reading

The Story of Redemption, “Wavering at God’s Promises,” pp. 76, 77;
Conflict and Courage, “Entertaining Strangers,” p. 50.

Lesson 8

The Promise

Sabbath Afternoon, May 14

Abraham's great act of faith stands like a pillar of light, illuminating the pathway of God's servants in all succeeding ages. Abraham did not seek to excuse himself from doing the will of God. During that three days' journey he had sufficient time to reason, and to doubt God, if he was disposed to doubt. . . . Abraham was human; his passions and attachments were like ours; but he did not stop to question how the promise could be fulfilled if Isaac should be slain. He did not stay to reason with his aching heart. He knew that God is just and righteous in all His requirements, and he obeyed the command to the very letter. . . .

Abraham's faith was made manifest by his works. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" James 2:21, 22. There are many who fail to understand the relation of faith and works. They say, "Only believe in Christ, and you are safe. You have nothing to do with keeping the law." But genuine faith will be manifest in obedience. Said Christ to the unbelieving Jews, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." John 8:39. . . .

Heavenly beings were witnesses of the scene as the faith of Abraham and the submission of Isaac were tested. The trial was far more severe than that which had been brought upon Adam. Compliance with the prohibition laid upon our first parents involved no suffering, but the command to Abraham demanded the most agonizing sacrifice. All heaven beheld with wonder and admiration Abraham's unfaltering obedience. All heaven applauded his fidelity. Satan's accusations were shown to be false. God declared to His servant, "Now I know that thou fearest God [notwithstanding Satan's charges], seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." God's covenant, confirmed to Abraham by an

oath before the intelligences of other worlds, testified that obedience will be rewarded.

It had been difficult even for the angels to grasp the mystery of redemption—to comprehend that the Commander of heaven, the Son of God, must die for guilty man. When the command was given to Abraham to offer up his son, the interest of all heavenly beings was enlisted. With intense earnestness they watched each step in the fulfillment of this command. When to Isaac's question, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham made answer, "God will provide Himself a lamb;" and when the father's hand was stayed as he was about to slay his son, and the ram which God had provided was offered in the place of Isaac—then light was shed upon the mystery of redemption, and even the angels understood more clearly the wonderful provision that God had made for man's salvation. 1 Peter 1:12.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 153–155.

Sunday, May 15: Mount Moriah

God had called Abraham to be the father of the faithful, and his life was to stand as an example of faith to succeeding generations. But his faith had not been perfect. He had shown distrust of God in concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, and again in his marriage with Hagar. That he might reach the highest standard, God subjected him to another test, the closest which man was ever called to endure. In a vision of the night he was directed to repair to the land of Moriah, and there offer up his son as a burnt offering upon a mountain that should be shown him.

At the time of receiving this command, Abraham had reached the age of a hundred and twenty years. He was regarded as an old man, even in his generation. In his earlier years he had been strong to endure hardship and to brave danger, but now the ardor of his youth had passed away. One in the vigor of manhood may with courage meet difficulties and afflictions that would cause his heart to fail later in life, when his feet are faltering toward the grave. But God had reserved His last, most trying test for Abraham until the burden of years was heavy upon him, and he longed for rest from anxiety and toil.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 147.

When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrong-doer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. . . .

The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will appreciate something of the love of God and the cost of Calvary; and as a son confesses to a loving father, so will the truly penitent bring all his sins before God.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 641.

The finite minds of men are inadequate fully to comprehend the plans and purposes of the Infinite One. We can never by searching find out God. We must not attempt to lift with presumptuous hand the curtain behind which He veils His majesty. The apostle exclaims: "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Romans 11:33. We can so

far comprehend His dealings with us, and the motives by which He is actuated, that we may discern boundless love and mercy united to infinite power. Our Father in heaven orders everything in wisdom and righteousness, and we are not to be dissatisfied and distrustful, but to bow in reverent submission. He will reveal to us as much of His purposes as it is for our good to know, and beyond that we must trust the Hand that is omnipotent, the Heart that is full of love.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 527.

Monday, May 16: God Will Provide

That day—the longest that Abraham had ever experienced—dragged slowly to its close. While his son and the young men were sleeping, he spent the night in prayer, still hoping that some heavenly messenger might come to say that the trial was enough, that the youth might return unharmed to his mother. But no relief came to his tortured soul. . . . Satan was near to whisper doubts and unbelief, but Abraham resisted his suggestions. . . .

Even now he did not murmur against God, but strengthened his soul by dwelling upon the evidences of the Lord's goodness and faithfulness. This son had been unexpectedly given; and had not He who bestowed the precious gift a right to recall His own? Then faith repeated the promise, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called"—a seed numberless as the grains of sand upon the shore. Isaac was the child of a miracle, and could not the power that gave him life restore it? Looking beyond that which was seen, Abraham grasped the divine word, "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Hebrews 11:19.

. . . With trembling voice, Abraham unfolded to his son the divine message. It was with terror and amazement that Isaac learned his fate, but he offered no resistance. He could have escaped his doom, had he chosen to do so; the grief-stricken old man, exhausted with the struggle of those three terrible days, could not have opposed the will of the vigorous youth. But Isaac had been trained from childhood to ready, trusting obedience, and as the purpose of God was opened before him, he yielded a willing submission. He was a sharer in Abraham's faith, and he felt that he was honored in being called to give his life as an offering to God. He tenderly seeks to lighten the father's grief, and encourages his nerveless hands to bind the cords that confine him to the altar. . . .

Then Abraham saw "a ram caught in a thicket," and quickly bringing the new victim, he offered it "in the stead of his son." In his joy and gratitude Abraham gave a new name to the sacred spot—"Jehovah-jireh," "the Lord will provide."

It was to impress Abraham's mind with the reality of the gospel, as well as to test his faith, that God commanded him to slay his son. . . . No other

test could have caused Abraham such torture of soul as did the offering of his son. God gave His Son to a death of agony and shame. The angels who witnessed the humiliation and soul anguish of the Son of God were not permitted to interpose, as in the case of Isaac. There was no voice to cry, "It is enough." To save the fallen race, the King of glory yielded up His life. What stronger proof can be given of the infinite compassion and love of God?—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 151–154.

Tuesday, May 17: The Death of Sarah

Sarah was the first and only true wife of Abraham. She was entitled to rights, as a wife and mother, which no other could have in the family. She revered her husband, calling him lord; but she was jealous lest his affections should be divided with Hagar. God did not rebuke Sarah for the course she pursued. Abraham was reprov'd by the angels for distrusting God's power, which had led him to take Hagar as his wife, and to think that through her the promise would be fulfilled. . . .

Abraham . . . did not reveal the true nature of his journey to Sarah, knowing that her affection for Isaac would lead her to distrust God, and withhold her son. Abraham did not suffer paternal feelings to control him, and lead him to rebel against God. The command of God was calculated to stir the depths of his soul. "Take now thy son." Then as though to probe the heart a little deeper, he adds, "thine only son whom thou lovest." That is, the only son of promise, "and offer him as a burnt-offering."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 104–106.

The heritage that God has promised to His people is not in this world. Abraham had no possession in the earth, "no, not so much as to set his foot on." Acts 7:5. He possessed great substance, and he used it to the glory of God and the good of his fellow men; but he did not look upon this world as his home. The Lord had called him to leave his idolatrous countrymen, with the promise of the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession; yet neither he nor his son nor his son's son received it. When Abraham desired a burial place for his dead, he had to buy it of the Canaanites. His sole possession in the Land of Promise was that rock-hewn tomb in the cave of Machpelah.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 169.

My sickness has taught me my own weakness, and my Saviour's patience and love, and His power to save. . . . He sees our weakness, He knows how we lack faith and courage; yet He does not cast us off. He is pitiful and of tender compassion toward us.

I may fall at my post before the Lord shall come; but when all that are in their graves shall come forth, I shall, if faithful, see Jesus, and be made

like Him. Oh, what joy unspeakable, to see Him whom we love,—to see Him in His glory who so loved us that He gave Himself for us,—to behold those hands once pierced for our redemption, stretched out to us in blessing and welcome! What will it matter though we toil and suffer here, if we may only attain to the resurrection of life! We will patiently wait till our time of trial ends, and then we shall raise the glad shout of victory.”—*Life Sketches*, p. 266.

Wednesday, May 18: A Wife for Isaac

Abraham had become an old man, and expected soon to die; yet one act remained for him to do in securing the fulfillment of the promise to his posterity. Isaac was the one divinely appointed to succeed him as the keeper of the law of God and the father of the chosen people, but he was yet unmarried. The inhabitants of Canaan were given to idolatry, and God had forbidden intermarriage between His people and them, knowing that such marriages would lead to apostasy. The patriarch feared the effect of the corrupting influences surrounding his son. Abraham's habitual faith in God and submission to His will were reflected in the character of Isaac; but the young man's affections were strong, and he was gentle and yielding in disposition. If united with one who did not fear God, he would be in danger of sacrificing principle for the sake of harmony. In the mind of Abraham the choice of a wife for his son was a matter of grave importance; he was anxious to have him marry one who would not lead him from God.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 171.

“And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is that that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 173.

One victory it is positively essential . . . to gain, [is] the victory over the stubborn will. In this struggle you can conquer only by the aid of Christ. You may struggle hard and long to subdue self, but you will fail unless you receive strength from on high. By the grace of Christ you can gain the victory over self and selfishness. As you live His life, showing self-sacrifice at every step, constantly revealing a stronger sympathy for those in need of help, you will gain victory after victory. Day by day you will learn

better how to conquer self and how to strengthen your weak points of character. The Lord Jesus will be your light, your strength, your crown of rejoicing, because you yield your will to His will.

Men and women may reach God's ideal for them if they will take Christ as their Helper. Make an unreserved surrender to God. To know that you are striving for eternal life will strengthen and comfort you. Christ can give you power to overcome. By His help you can utterly destroy the root of selfishness.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 49.

Thursday, May 19: A Wife for Abraham

Abraham had marked the result of the intermarriage of those who feared God and those who feared Him not, from the days of Cain to his own time. The consequences of his own marriage with Hagar, and of the marriage connections of Ishmael and Lot, were before him. The lack of faith on the part of Abraham and Sarah had resulted in the birth of Ishmael, the mingling of the righteous seed with the ungodly. The father's influence upon his son was counteracted by that of the mother's idolatrous kindred and by Ishmael's connection with heathen wives. The jealousy of Hagar, and of the wives whom she chose for Ishmael, surrounded his family with a barrier that Abraham endeavored in vain to overcome.

Abraham's early teachings had not been without effect upon Ishmael, but the influence of his wives resulted in establishing idolatry in his family. Separated from his father, and embittered by the strife and contention of a home destitute of the love and fear of God, Ishmael was driven to choose the wild, marauding life of the desert chief, "his hand" "against every man, and every man's hand against him." Genesis 16:12. In his latter days he repented of his evil ways and returned to his father's God, but the stamp of character given to his posterity remained. The powerful nation descended from him were a turbulent, heathen people, who were ever an annoyance and affliction to the descendants of Isaac.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 173, 174.

As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants. The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation.

This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Genesis 22:18. This

promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it (see Galatians 3:8, 16), and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 370.

Abraham was a man favored of God. The Lord said: “I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.” Abraham was honored of God because he cultivated home religion and caused the fear of the Lord to pervade his whole household. It is God who says: “I know him, that he will command”—there will be no betraying of sacred trust on his part, no yielding to anyone but God; there is a law, and Abraham will keep it; no blind affection will cloud his sense of right and interfere between God and the souls of his children; that kind of indulgence which is the veriest cruelty will not lead Abraham astray.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 547, 548.

Friday, May 20: For Further Reading

My Life Today, “Walk by Faith,” p. 342;

The Desire of Ages, “The Light of Life,” pp. 468, 469.

Lesson 9

Jacob the Supplanter

Sabbath Afternoon, May 21

Isaac made known to his sons [the] privileges and conditions [of the birthright], and plainly stated that Esau, as the eldest, was the one entitled to the birthright. But Esau had no love for devotion, no inclination to a religious life. The requirements that accompanied the spiritual birthright were an unwelcome and even hateful restraint to him. The law of God, which was the condition of the divine covenant with Abraham, was regarded by Esau as a yoke of bondage. . . . Rebekah . . . was convinced that the heritage of divine promise was intended for Jacob. She repeated to Isaac the angel's words; but the father's affections were centered upon the elder son, and he was unshaken in his purpose.

Jacob had learned from his mother of the divine intimation that the birthright should fall to him, and he was filled with an unspeakable desire for the privileges which it would confer. It was not the possession of his father's wealth that he craved; the spiritual birthright was the object of his longing. To commune with God as did righteous Abraham, to offer the sacrifice of atonement for his family, to be the progenitor of the chosen people and of the promised Messiah, and to inherit the immortal possessions embraced in the blessings of the covenant—here were the privileges and honors that kindled his most ardent desires. His mind was ever reaching forward to the future, and seeking to grasp its unseen blessings.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 178.

It was through faith and prayer that Jacob, from being a man of feebleness and sin, became a prince with God. It is thus that you may become men and women of high and holy purpose, of noble life, men and women who will not for any consideration be swayed from truth, right, and justice. All are pressed with urgent cares, burdens, and duties, but the

more difficult your position and the heavier your burdens, the more you need Jesus.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 511.

Faith is an essential element of prevailing prayer. “He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” “If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” Hebrews 11:6; 1 John 5:14, 15. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, we may present our petitions to the Father, claiming all that He has promised. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 157, 158.

Sunday, May 22: Jacob and Esau

Jacob and Esau, the twin sons of Isaac, present a striking contrast, both in character and in life. This unlikeness was foretold by the angel of God before their birth. When in answer to Rebekah's troubled prayer he declared that two sons would be given her, he opened to her their future history, that each would become the head of a mighty nation, but that one would be greater than the other, and that the younger would have the pre-eminence.

Esau grew up loving self-gratification and centering all his interest in the present. Impatient of restraint, he delighted in the wild freedom of the chase, and early chose the life of a hunter. Yet he was the father's favorite. The quiet, peace-loving shepherd was attracted by the daring and vigor of this elder son, who fearlessly ranged over mountain and desert, returning home with game for his father and with exciting accounts of his adventurous life. Jacob, thoughtful, diligent, and care-taking, ever thinking more of the future than the present, was content to dwell at home, occupied in the care of the flocks and the tillage of the soil. His patient perseverance, thrift, and foresight were valued by the mother. His affections were deep and strong, and his gentle, unremitting attentions added far more to her happiness than did the boisterous and occasional kindnesses of Esau. To Rebekah, Jacob was the dearer son. . . .

[While he] esteemed eternal above temporal blessings, Jacob had not an experimental knowledge of the God whom he revered. His heart had not been renewed by divine grace. He believed that the promise concerning himself could not be fulfilled so long as Esau retained the rights of the first-born, and he constantly studied to devise some way whereby he might secure the blessing which his brother held so lightly, but which was so precious to himself.

When Esau, coming home one day faint and weary from the chase, asked for the food that Jacob was preparing, the latter, with whom one thought was ever uppermost, seized upon his advantage, and offered to satisfy his brother's hunger at the price of the birthright. "Behold, I am at the point to die," cried the reckless, self-indulgent hunter, "and what profit

shall this birthright do to me?" And for a dish of red pottage he parted with his birthright, and confirmed the transaction by an oath. . . .

"Thus Esau despised his birthright." In disposing of it he felt a sense of relief. Now his way was unobstructed; he could do as he liked. For this wild pleasure, miscalled freedom, how many are still selling their birthright to an inheritance pure and undefiled, eternal in the heavens!—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 177–179.

It is the motive that gives character to our acts, stamping them with ignominy or with high moral worth. Not the great things which every eye sees and every tongue praises does God account most precious. The little duties cheerfully done, the little gifts which make no show, and which to human eyes may appear worthless, often stand highest in His sight. A heart of faith and love is dearer to God than the most costly gift.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 615.

Monday, May 23: Jacob's Ladder

Threatened with death by the wrath of Esau, Jacob went out from his father's home a fugitive; but he carried with him the father's blessing; Isaac had renewed to him the covenant promise, and had bidden him, as its inheritor, to seek a wife of his mother's family in Mesopotamia. Yet it was with a deeply troubled heart that Jacob set out on his lonely journey. With only his staff in his hand he must travel hundreds of miles through a country inhabited by wild, roving tribes. In his remorse and timidity he sought to avoid men, lest he should be traced by his angry brother. He feared that he had lost forever the blessing that God had purposed to give him. . . .

But God did not forsake Jacob. His mercy was still extended to His erring, distrustful servant. The Lord compassionately revealed just what Jacob needed—a Saviour. He had sinned, but his heart was filled with gratitude as he saw revealed a way by which he could be restored to the favor of God.

Wearied with his journey, the wanderer lay down upon the ground, with a stone for his pillow. As he slept he beheld a ladder, bright and shining, whose base rested upon the earth, while the top reached to heaven. Upon this ladder angels were ascending and descending; above it was the Lord of glory, and from the heavens His voice was heard: "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." The land whereon he lay as an exile and fugitive was promised to him and to his posterity, with the assurance, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This promise had been given to Abraham and to Isaac, and now it was renewed to Jacob. Then in special regard to his present loneliness and distress, the words of comfort and encouragement were spoken: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 183, 184.

Our time, our talents, our property, should be sacredly devoted to Him who has given us these blessings in trust. Whenever a special deliverance is wrought in our behalf, or new and unexpected favors are granted us, we

should acknowledge God's goodness, not only by expressing our gratitude in words, but, like Jacob, by gifts and offerings to His cause. As we are continually receiving the blessings of God, so we are to be continually giving.

"Of all that Thou shalt give me," said Jacob, "I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." Shall we who enjoy the full light and privileges of the gospel be content to give less to God than was given by those who lived in the former, less favored dispensation? Nay, as the blessings we enjoy are greater, are not our obligations correspondingly increased? But how small the estimate; how vain the endeavor to measure with mathematical rules, time, money, and love, against a love so immeasurable and a gift of such inconceivable worth. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 187, 188.

Tuesday, May 24: The Deceiver Deceived

Seven years of faithful service Jacob gave for Rachel, and the years that he served “seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.” But the selfish and grasping Laban, desiring to retain so valuable a helper, practiced a cruel deception in substituting Leah for Rachel. . . . His indignant rebuke to Laban was met with the offer of Rachel for another seven years’ service. But the father insisted that Leah should not be discarded, since this would bring disgrace upon the family. Jacob was thus placed in a most painful and trying position; he finally decided to retain Leah and marry Rachel. Rachel was ever the one best loved; but his preference for her excited envy and jealousy, and his life was embittered by the rivalry between the sister-wives.

For twenty years Jacob remained in Mesopotamia, laboring in the service of Laban, who, disregarding the ties of kinship, was bent upon securing to himself all the benefits of their connection. Fourteen years of toil he demanded for his two daughters; and during the remaining period, Jacob’s wages were ten times changed. Yet Jacob’s service was diligent and faithful.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 189, 190.

Deceit, falsehood, and unfaithfulness may be glossed over and hidden from the eyes of man, but not from the eyes of God. The angels of God, who watch the development of character and weigh moral worth, record in the books of heaven these minor transactions which reveal character. If a workman in the daily vocations of life is unfaithful and slights his work, the world will not judge incorrectly if they estimate his standard in religion according to his standard in business.

“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.” It is not the magnitude of the matter that makes it fair or unfair. As a man deals with his fellow men, so will he deal with God. He that is unfaithful in the mammon of unrighteousness, will never be entrusted with the true riches. The children of God should not fail to remember that in all their business transactions they are being proved, weighed in the balances of the sanctuary.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 310, 311.

Jesus took upon Himself man's nature, that He might leave a pattern for humanity, complete, perfect. He proposes to make us like Himself, true in every purpose, feeling, and thought—true in heart, soul, and life. This is Christianity. Our fallen nature must be purified, ennobled, consecrated by obedience to the truth. Christian faith will never harmonize with worldly principles; Christian integrity is opposed to all deception and pretense. The man who cherishes the most of Christ's love in the soul, who reflects the Saviour's image most perfectly, is in the sight of God the truest, most noble, most honorable man upon the earth.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 235.

Wednesday, May 25: The Blessing of the Family

When Jacob realized the deception that had been practiced upon him, and that Leah had acted her part in deceiving him, he could not love Leah. Laban wished to retain the faithful services of Jacob a greater length of time, therefore deceived him by giving him Leah, instead of Rachel. Jacob reproved Laban for thus trifling with his affections, in giving him Leah, whom he had not loved. Laban entreated Jacob not to put away Leah, for this was considered a great disgrace, not only to the wife, but to the whole family. Jacob was placed in a most trying position, but he decided to still retain Leah, and also marry her sister. Leah was loved in a much less degree than Rachel.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 117, 118.

Inspiration faithfully records the faults of good men, those who were distinguished by the favor of God; indeed, their faults are more fully presented than their virtues. This has been a subject of wonder to many, and has given the infidel occasion to scoff at the Bible. But it is one of the strongest evidences of the truth of Scripture, that facts are not glossed over, nor the sins of its chief characters suppressed. The minds of men are so subject to prejudice that it is not possible for human histories to be absolutely impartial. Had the Bible been written by uninspired persons, it would no doubt have presented the character of its honored men in a more flattering light. But as it is, we have a correct record of their experiences.

Men whom God favored, and to whom He entrusted great responsibilities, were sometimes overcome by temptation and committed sin, even as we at the present day strive, waver, and frequently fall into error. Their lives, with all their faults and follies, are open before us, both for our encouragement and warning. If they had been represented as without fault, we, with our sinful nature, might despair at our own mistakes and failures. But seeing where others struggled through discouragements like our own, where they fell under temptations as we have done, and yet took heart again and conquered through the grace of God, we are encouraged in our striving after righteousness. As they, though sometimes beaten back, recovered their ground, and were blessed

of God, so we too may be overcomers in the strength of Jesus. On the other hand, the record of their lives may serve as a warning to us. It shows that God will by no means clear the guilty. He sees sin in His most favored ones, and He deals with it in them even more strictly than in those who have less light and responsibility.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 238.

We are wholly dependent on God, and our faith is strengthened by still believing, though we cannot see God's purpose in His dealing with us, or the consequence of this dealing. Faith points forward and upward to things to come, laying hold of the only power that can make us complete in Him. "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me," God declares, "and he shall make peace with Me."—*Temperance*, pp. 195, 196.

Thursday, May 26: Jacob Leaves

As time passed on, Laban became envious of the greater prosperity of Jacob, who “increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.” Laban’s sons shared their father’s jealousy, and their malicious speeches came to Jacob’s ears: He “hath taken away all that was our father’s, and of that which was our father’s hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before.”

Jacob would have left his crafty kinsman long before but for the fear of encountering Esau. Now he felt that he was in danger from the sons of Laban, who, looking upon his wealth as their own, might endeavor to secure it by violence.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 192, 193.

Jacob was distressed. He knew not which way to turn. He carried his case to God and interceded for direction from Him. The Lord mercifully answered his distressed prayer. “And the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

“And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, and said unto them, I see your father’s countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.” Jacob related to them the dream given him of God, to leave Laban and go unto his kindred. Rachel and Leah expressed their dissatisfaction of their father’s proceedings. As Jacob rehearsed his wrongs to them and proposed to leave Laban, Rachel and Leah said to Jacob, “Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father’s house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children’s; now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.”—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 90, 91.

Since the sin of our first parents there has been no direct communication between God and man. The Father has given the world into the hands of Christ, that through His mediatorial work He may

redeem man and vindicate the authority and holiness of the law of God. All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ. It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. They looked for salvation through man's Substitute and Surety. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh; and some of them talked with Christ and heavenly angels face to face.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 366.

Friday, May 27: For Further Reading

My Life Today, “With Truthfulness,” p. 331;
The Story of Redemption, “Jacob’s Years of Exile,” pp. 89, 90.

Lesson 10

Jacob-Israel

Sabbath Afternoon, May 28

Jacob had chosen the inheritance of faith. He had endeavored to obtain it by craft, treachery, and falsehood; but God had permitted his sin to work out its correction. Yet through all the bitter experience of his later years, Jacob had never swerved from his purpose or renounced his choice. He had learned that in resorting to human skill and craft to secure the blessing, he had been warring against God. From that night of wrestling beside the Jabbok, Jacob had come forth a different man. Self-confidence had been uprooted. Henceforth the early cunning was no longer seen. In place of craft and deception, his life was marked by simplicity and truth. He had learned the lesson of simple reliance upon the Almighty Arm, and amid trial and affliction he bowed in humble submission to the will of God. The baser elements of character were consumed in the furnace fire, the true gold was refined, until the faith of Abraham and Isaac appeared undimmed in Jacob.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 208.

The character of God as revealed by Christ invites our faith and love, for we have a Father whose mercy and compassion fail not. At every step of our journey heavenward He will be with us to guide in every perplexity, to give us help in every temptation. . . .

He who constantly depends upon God through simple trust and prayerful confidence, will be surrounded by the angels of heaven. He who lives by faith in Christ, will be strengthened and upheld, able to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon eternal life.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 16.

It is a marvel to me that God will bear with the perversity of the children of men so long, bearing with their disobedience and yet suffering them to live, abusing His mercies, bearing false witness against Him in most wicked statements. But God's ways are not as our ways, and we will

not marvel at His loving forbearance and tender pity and infinite compassion, for He has given an unmistakable evidence that this is just like His character—slow to anger, showing mercy unto thousands of those who love Him and keep His commandments. . . .

The obligations resting upon us are not small. Our sense of dependence will drive us closer to God, and our sense of duty to be performed will summon us to effort, combined with our earnest prayers—works, faith, and continual prayer. Power! Power! Our great cry is for power without measure! It awaits us. We have only to draw; to take God at His word; to act faith; to stand firmly upon the promises; to wrestle for the endowment of the grace of God. Learning is not essential; genius is not necessary; eloquence may be lacking; but the prayer of the lowly and contrite heart God hears, and when He hears no obstacles on earth can hinder. The power of God will make us effectual.—*This Day With God*, p. 187.

Sunday, May 29: Wrestling With God

Jacob's night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (Genesis 32:24-30), represents the experience of God's people in the time of trouble. Because of the deception practiced to secure his father's blessing, intended for Esau, Jacob had fled for his life, alarmed by his brother's deadly threats. After remaining for many years an exile, he had set out, at God's command, to return with his wives and children, his flocks and herds, to his native country. On reaching the borders of the land, he was filled with terror by the tidings of Esau's approach at the head of a band of warriors, doubtless bent upon revenge. Jacob's company, unarmed and defenseless, seemed about to fall helpless victims of violence and slaughter. And to the burden of anxiety and fear was added the crushing weight of self-reproach, for it was his own sin that had brought this danger. His only hope was in the mercy of God; his only defense must be prayer. . . .

. . . In the darkness and solitude he continues praying and humbling himself before God. Suddenly a hand is laid upon his shoulder. He thinks that an enemy is seeking his life, and with all the energy of despair he wrestles with his assailant. As the day begins to break, the stranger puts forth his superhuman power; at his touch the strong man seems paralyzed, and he falls, a helpless, weeping suppliant, upon the neck of his mysterious antagonist. Jacob knows now that it is the Angel of the covenant with whom he has been in conflict. Though disabled and suffering the keenest pain, he does not relinquish his purpose. Long has he endured perplexity, remorse, and trouble for his sin; now he must have the assurance that it is pardoned. . . . The patriarch exclaims, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." What confidence, what firmness and perseverance, are here displayed! . . . His was the assurance of one who confesses his weakness and unworthiness, yet trusts the mercy of a covenant-keeping God. . . .

. . . He had fastened his trembling grasp upon the promises of God, and the heart of Infinite Love could not turn away the sinner's plea. As an evidence of his triumph and an encouragement to others to imitate his example, his name was changed from one which was a reminder of his sin,

to one that commemorated his victory.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 616, 617.

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. . . .

The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand beside the great Sin Bearer, in the light proceeding from the throne of God.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 568.

Monday, May 30: The Brothers Meet

Esau was marching against Jacob with an army, for the purpose of killing his brother. But while Jacob was wrestling with the angel that night, another angel was sent to move upon the heart of Esau in his sleeping hours. In his dream he saw Jacob in exile from his father's house for twenty years, because he was afraid of his life. And he marked his sorrow to find his mother dead. He saw in his dream Jacob's humility and angels of God around about him. He dreamed that when they met he had no mind to harm him. When Esau awoke he related his dream to his four hundred men and told them that they must not injure Jacob, for the God of his father was with him. And when they should meet Jacob, not one of them should do him harm.—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 96.

Leaning upon his staff, the patriarch went forward to meet the band of soldiers. He was pale and disabled from his recent conflict, and he walked slowly and painfully, halting at every step; but his countenance was lighted up with joy and peace.

At sight of that crippled sufferer, "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept." As they looked upon the scene, even the hearts of Esau's rude soldiers were touched. Notwithstanding he had told them of his dream, they could not account for the change that had come over their captain. Though they beheld the patriarch's infirmity, they little thought that this his weakness had been made his strength.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 198.

How often we feel that we have been dealt with unjustly, that things have been said concerning us that were untrue, and that we have been set in a false light before others. When we are thus tried, we shall need to keep strict guard over our spirit and our words. We shall need to have the love of Christ, that we may not cherish an unforgiving spirit. Let us not think that unless those who have injured us confess their wrongs, we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. We should not accumulate our grievances, holding them to our hearts until the one we think guilty has humbled his heart by repentance and confession. . . . However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our

grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries, but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God, so must we pardon those who have done evil to us. . . . When we are reviled, how strong is the temptation to revile in return, but in doing this we show ourselves as bad as the reviler. When tempted to revile, send up a silent prayer that God will give you His grace, and keep the tongue in silence.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 144.

Tuesday, May 31: The Violation of Dinah

The tarry of Jacob and his sons at Shechem ended in violence and bloodshed. The one daughter of the household had been brought to shame and sorrow, two brothers were involved in the guilt of murder, a whole city had been given to ruin and slaughter, in retaliation for the lawless deed of one rash youth. . . .

The treacherous cruelty of Simeon and Levi was not unprovoked; yet in their course toward the Shechemites they committed a grievous sin. They had carefully concealed from Jacob their intentions, and the tidings of their revenge filled him with horror. Heartsick at the deceit and violence of his sons, he only said, "Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land: . . . and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house." But the grief and abhorrence with which he regarded their bloody deed is shown by the words in which, nearly fifty years later, he referred to it, as he lay upon his deathbed in Egypt: "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. . . . Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel." Genesis 49:5-7.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 204, 205.

Human nature is ever struggling for expression, ready for contest; but he who learns of Christ is emptied of self, of pride, of love of supremacy, and there is silence in the soul. Self is yielded to the disposal of the Holy Spirit. Then we are not anxious to have the highest place. We have no ambition to crowd and elbow ourselves into notice; but we feel that our highest place is at the feet of our Saviour. We look to Jesus, waiting for His hand to lead, listening for His voice to guide. . . .

When we receive Christ as an abiding guest in the soul, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The Saviour's life on earth, though lived in the midst of conflict, was a life of peace. While angry enemies were constantly pursuing Him, He said, "He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." John 8:29. No

storm of human or satanic wrath could disturb the calm of that perfect communion with God.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 15, 16.

The Son of God was appointed to come to this earth to take humanity and by His own example to be a great educating power among men. His experience in man's behalf was to enable men to resist Satan's power. . . . The sons of men had had a practical knowledge of evil; Christ came to the world to show them that He had planted for them the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 33, 34.

Wednesday, June 1: Prevailing Idolatry

Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments, and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their ear-rings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.” And the family of Jacob never found them again. . . .

Jacob was humbled, and required his family to humble themselves, and to lay off all their ornaments, for he was to make an atonement for their sins, by offering a sacrifice unto God, that he might be entreated for them, and not leave them to be destroyed by other nations. God accepted the efforts of Jacob to remove the wrong from his family, and appeared unto him, and blessed him, and renewed the promise made to him, because his fear was before him.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 137.

Paul urged his brethren to ask themselves what influence their words and deeds would have upon others and to do nothing, however innocent in itself, that would seem to sanction idolatry or offend the scruples of those who might be weak in the faith. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.”

The apostle’s words of warning to the Corinthian church are applicable to all time and are especially adapted to our day. By idolatry he meant not only the worship of idols, but self-serving, love of ease, the gratification of appetite and passion. A mere profession of faith in Christ, a boastful knowledge of the truth, does not make a man a Christian. A religion that seeks only to gratify the eye, the ear, and the taste, or that sanctions self-indulgence, is not the religion of Christ.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 316, 317.

The cause of God is to hold the first place in our plans and affections. There is need of bearing a straight message concerning the indulgence of

self while the cause of God is in need of means. Some are so cold and backslidden that they do not realize that they are setting their affections on earthly treasure, which is soon to be swept away forever. The love of the world is binding them about, like a thick garment; and unless they change their course, they will not know how precious it is to practice self-denial for Christ's sake. All our idols, our love of the world, must be expelled from the heart.

There are ministers and faithful friends who see the danger that surrounds these self-bound souls, and who faithfully present to them the error of their course, but instead of taking admonitions in the spirit in which they are given, and profiting thereby, those reprov'd rise up against the ones who deal with them faithfully.—*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 220, 221.

Thursday, June 2: The Death of Rachel

From Bethel it was only a two days' journey to Hebron, but it brought to Jacob a heavy grief in the death of Rachel. Twice seven years' service he had rendered for her sake, and his love had made the toil but light. How deep and abiding that love had been, was shown when long afterward, as Jacob in Egypt lay near his death, Joseph came to visit his father, and the aged patriarch, glancing back upon his own life, said, "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath." Genesis 48:7. In the family history of his long and troubled life the loss of Rachel was alone recalled.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 206.

Humanity has in itself no light. Apart from Christ we are like an unkindled taper, like the moon when her face is turned away from the sun; we have not a single ray of brightness to shed into the darkness of the world. But when we turn toward the Sun of Righteousness, when we come in touch with Christ, the whole soul is aglow with the brightness of the divine presence.

Christ's followers are to be more than a light in the midst of men. They are the light of the world. Jesus says to all who have named His name, You have given yourselves to Me, and I have given you to the world as My representatives. As the Father had sent Him into the world, so, He declares, "have I also sent them into the world." John 17:18. As Christ is the channel for the revelation of the Father, so we are to be the channel for the revelation of Christ. While our Saviour is the great source of illumination, forget not, O Christian, that He is revealed through humanity. God's blessings are bestowed through human instrumentality. Christ Himself came to the world as the Son of man. Humanity, united to the divine nature, must touch humanity. The church of Christ, every individual disciple of the Master, is heaven's appointed channel for the revelation of God to men. Angels of glory wait to communicate through you heaven's light and power to souls that are ready to perish.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 40.

There is absolutely no safeguard against evil but truth. No man can stand firm for right in whose heart the truth does not abide. There is only one power that can make and keep us steadfast—the power of God, imparted to us through the grace of Christ.

Connected with Christ, human nature becomes true and pure. Christ supplies the efficiency, and man becomes a power for good. . . . Truthfulness and integrity are attributes of God, and he who possesses these qualities possesses a power that is invincible. —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 179.

Friday, June 3: For Further Reading

Sons and Daughters of God, “Changes Us From Sinners to Saints,” p. 112;
Reflecting Christ, “Power to Prevail With God and Men,” p. 120.

Lesson 11

Joseph, Master of Dreams

Sabbath Afternoon, June 4

Joseph illustrates Christ. Jesus came to His own, but His own received Him not. He was rejected and despised, because His acts were righteous, and His consistent, self-denying life was a continual rebuke upon those who professed piety, but whose lives were corrupt. Joseph's integrity and virtue were fiercely assailed, and she who would lead him astray could not prevail, therefore her hatred was strong against the virtue and integrity which she could not corrupt, and she testified falsely against him. The innocent suffered because of his righteousness. He was cast into prison because of his virtue. Joseph was sold to his enemies by his own brethren for a small sum of money. The Son of God was sold to His bitterest enemies by one of His own disciples. Jesus was meek and holy. His was a life of unexampled self-denial, goodness, and holiness. He was not guilty of any wrong. Yet false witnesses were hired to testify against Him. He was hated because He had been a faithful reprover of sin and corruption. Joseph's brethren stripped him of his coat of many colors. The executioners of Jesus cast lots for His seamless coat.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1096.

We should now acquaint ourselves with God by proving His promises. Angels record every prayer that is earnest and sincere. We should rather dispense with selfish gratifications than neglect communion with God. The deepest poverty, the greatest self-denial, with His approval, is better than riches, honors, ease, and friendship without it. We must take time to pray. If we allow our minds to be absorbed by worldly interests, the Lord may give us time by removing from us our idols of gold, of houses, or of fertile lands.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 622.

Our heavenly Father does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men. He has His purpose in the whirlwind and in the storm, in the fire

and in the flood. The Lord permits calamities to come to His people to save them from greater dangers. He desires everyone to examine his own heart closely and carefully, and then draw near to God, that God may draw near to him.

Our life is in the hands of God. He sees dangers threatening us that we cannot see. He is the giver of all our blessings; the provider of all our mercies; the orderer of all our experiences. He sees the perils that we cannot see. He may permit to come upon His people that which fills their hearts with sadness, because He sees that they need to make straight paths for their feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way. He knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust. Even the very hairs of our head are numbered. . . . Trials come to us all to lead us to investigate our hearts, to see if they are purified from all that defiles. Constantly the Lord is working to our present and eternal good.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 265.

Sunday, June 5: Family Troubles

The sin of Jacob, and the train of events to which it led, had not failed to exert an influence for evil—an influence that revealed its bitter fruit in the character and life of his sons. As these sons arrived at manhood they developed serious faults. The results of polygamy were manifest in the household. This terrible evil tends to dry up the very springs of love, and its influence weakens the most sacred ties. The jealousy of the several mothers had embittered the family relation, the children had grown up contentious and impatient of control, and the father's life was darkened with anxiety and grief.

There was one, however, of a widely different character—the elder son of Rachel, Joseph, whose rare personal beauty seemed but to reflect an inward beauty of mind and heart. . . . His mother being dead, his affections clung the more closely to the father, and Jacob's heart was bound up in this child of his old age. He “loved Joseph more than all his children.”

But even this affection was to become a cause of trouble and sorrow. Jacob unwisely manifested his preference for Joseph, and this excited the jealousy of his other sons.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 209.

Joseph listened to his father's instructions, and feared the Lord. He was more obedient to his father's righteous teachings than any of his brethren. He treasured his instructions, and with integrity of heart, loved to obey God. He was grieved at the wrong conduct of some of his brethren, and meekly entreated them to pursue a righteous course, and leave off their wicked acts. This only embittered them against him. His hatred of sin was such that he could not endure to see his brethren sinning against God. He laid the matter before his father, hoping that his authority might reform them. This exposure of their wrongs enraged his brethren against him. They had observed their father's strong love for Joseph, and were envious at him. Their envy grew into hatred, and finally to murder.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 138.

No human being is to seat himself on the highest seat, accepting the praise of others, and forgetting that his treasures belong to God. God's

blessing is promised to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, but nothing is so offensive as to hunger and thirst after the praise of men. .

..

Were it not for God's gracious gifts and blessings, we should be bankrupt for eternity. Then let no one sound his own praises, feeding upon his supposed wisdom. If his talents were of his own manufacture, there would be some consistency in self-praise. But man has nothing of his own. Let us not reveal our lack of true wisdom by exalting self. Let us bow low in humility at the feet of Him who has entrusted to us our talents. Let us use and improve these talents, handing principle and interest back to the Giver.—*This Day With God*, p. 200.

Monday, June 6: The Attack on Joseph

Twice God's covenant and His statutes had been rejected by the world. Both the people before the Flood and the descendants of Noah cast off the divine authority. Then God entered into covenant with Abraham, and took to Himself a people to become the depositaries of His law. To seduce and destroy this people, Satan began at once to lay his snares. The children of Jacob were tempted to contract marriages with the heathen and to worship their idols.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 332.

[Joseph's] brothers rudely repulsed him. He told them his errand, but they answered him not. Joseph was alarmed at their angry looks. Fear took the place of joy, and he instinctively shrank with dread from their presence. They then took hold of him violently. They taunted him with the admonitions he had given them in the past, accused him of relating his dreams to exalt himself above them in the mind of their father, that he might love him more than themselves.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1096.

A good character must be built up brick by brick. Those characteristics which will enable the youth to labor successfully in God's cause must be obtained by the diligent exercise of their faculties, by improving every advantage Providence gives them, and by connecting with the Source of all wisdom. They must be satisfied with no low standard. The characters of Joseph and Daniel are good models for them to follow; and in the life of the Saviour they have a perfect pattern.

All are given an opportunity to develop character. All may fill their appointed places in God's great plan. The Lord accepted Samuel from his very childhood, because his heart was pure. He was given to God, a consecrated offering, and the Lord made him a channel of light. If the youth of today will consecrate themselves as did Samuel, the Lord will accept them and use them in His work. Of their life they may be able to say with the psalmist, "O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared Thy wondrous works." Psalm 71:17.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 537.

Tuesday, June 7: Judah and Tamar

None but the Son of God could accomplish our redemption; for only He who was in the bosom of the Father could declare Him. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it manifest. Nothing less than the infinite sacrifice made by Christ in behalf of fallen man could express the Father's love to lost humanity. . . .

. . . He who was one with God has linked Himself with the children of men by ties that are never to be broken. Jesus is "not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11); He is our Sacrifice, our Advocate, our Brother, bearing our human form before the Father's throne, and through eternal ages one with the race He has redeemed—the Son of man. And all this that man might be uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin that he might reflect the love of God and share the joy of holiness.

The price paid for our redemption, the infinite sacrifice of our heavenly Father in giving His Son to die for us, should give us exalted conceptions of what we may become through Christ. . . . "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John 3:1. What a value this places upon man! Through transgression the sons of man become subjects of Satan. Through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ the sons of Adam may become the sons of God. By assuming human nature, Christ elevates humanity. Fallen men are placed where, through connection with Christ, they may indeed become worthy of the name "sons of God."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 14, 15.

It was taught by the Jews that before God's love is extended to the sinner, he must first repent. In their view, repentance is a work by which men earn the favor of Heaven. And it was this thought that led the Pharisees to exclaim in astonishment and anger, "This man receiveth sinners." According to their ideas He should permit none to approach Him but those who had repented. But in the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God's seeking after us. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way." Romans

3:11, 12. We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 189.

Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, "Ye shall receive."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 564.

Wednesday, June 8: Joseph, a Slave in Egypt

Joseph regarded his being sold into Egypt as the greatest calamity that could have befallen him; but he saw the necessity of trusting in God as he had never done when protected by his father's love. Joseph brought God with him into Egypt, and the fact was made apparent by his cheerful demeanor amid his sorrow. As the ark of God brought rest and prosperity to Israel, so did this God-loving, God-fearing youth bring a blessing to Egypt. This was manifested in so marked a manner that Potiphar, in whose house he served, attributed all his blessings to his purchased slave, and made him a son rather than a servant. It is God's purpose that those who love and honor His name shall be honored also themselves, and that the glory given to God through them shall be reflected upon themselves.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1096.

Joseph's brethren flattered themselves that they were taking a sure course to prevent the fulfillment of Joseph's strange dreams. But the Lord controlled events, and caused the cruel course of Joseph's brethren to bring about the fulfillment of the dreams which they were laboring to frustrate.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 143.

When Joseph was tempted to deviate from the path of right, to transgress the law of God and prove untrue to his master, he firmly resisted and gave evidence of the elevating power of the fear of God in his answer to his master's wife. . . . He would not be persuaded to deviate from the path of righteousness and trample upon God's law by any inducements or threats. . . .

Here is an example to all generations who should live upon the earth. Although they may be exposed to temptations, yet they should ever realize that there is a defense at hand, and it will be their own fault if they are not preserved. God will be a present help, and His Spirit a shield. Although surrounded with the severest temptations, there is a source of strength to which they can apply and resist them.

How fierce was the assault upon Joseph's morals. It came from one of influence, the most likely to lead astray. Yet how promptly and firmly was

it resisted. He suffered for his virtue and integrity, for she who would lead him astray revenged herself upon the virtue she could not subvert, and by her influence caused him to be cast into prison, by charging him with a foul wrong. Here Joseph suffered because he would not yield his integrity. He had placed his reputation and interest in the hands of God. And although he was suffered to be afflicted for a time, to prepare him to fill an important position, yet God safely guarded that reputation that was blackened by a wicked accuser, and afterward, in His own good time, caused it to shine. God made even the prison the way to his elevation. Virtue will in time bring its own reward. The shield which covered Joseph's heart was the fear of God, which caused him to be faithful and just to his master and true to God.—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 101–103.

Thursday, June 9: The Dreams of Pharaoh

[A] divine hand was about to open the prison gates. The king of Egypt had in one night two dreams, apparently pointing to the same event and seeming to foreshadow some great calamity. He could not determine their significance, yet they continued to trouble his mind. The magicians and wise men of his realm could give no interpretation. The king's perplexity and distress increased, and terror spread throughout his palace. The general agitation recalled to the chief butler's mind the circumstances of his own dream; with it came the memory of Joseph, and a pang of remorse for his forgetfulness and ingratitude. He at once informed the king how his own dream and that of the chief baker had been interpreted by a Hebrew captive, and how the predictions had been fulfilled.

It was humiliating to Pharaoh to turn away from the magicians and wise men of his kingdom to consult an alien and a slave, but he was ready to accept the lowliest service if his troubled mind might find relief. Joseph was immediately sent for; he put off his prison attire. . . . He was then conducted to the presence of the king.

"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Joseph's reply to the king reveals his humility and his faith in God. He modestly disclaims the honor of possessing in himself superior wisdom. "It is not in me." God alone can explain these mysteries.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 219, 220.

From the dungeon Joseph was exalted to be ruler over all the land of Egypt. It was a position of high honor, yet it was beset with difficulty and peril. . . . But Joseph's character bore the test alike of adversity and prosperity. The same fidelity to God was manifest when he stood in the palace of the Pharaohs as when in a prisoner's cell. He was still a stranger in a heathen land, separated from his kindred, the worshipers of God; but he fully believed that the divine hand had directed his steps, and in constant reliance upon God he faithfully discharged the duties of his

position. Through Joseph the attention of the king and great men of Egypt was directed to the true God.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 222.

In Christian experience, the Lord permits trials of various kinds to call men and women to a higher order of living and to a more sanctified service. Without these trials there would be a continual falling away from the likeness of Christ, and men would become imbued with a spirit of . . . fanciful, human philosophy, which would lead them to unite with Satan's followers. . . .

. . . Men [and women] in positions of trust are to be instrumentalities in the hands of God for promoting His glory.—Manuscript 85, August 22, 1906.

Friday, June 10: For Further Reading

Sons and Daughters of God, “Joseph a Christian Gentleman,” p. 320;
The SDA Bible Commentary, “God Behind All His Promises,” vol. 7, p.
942.

Lesson 12

Joseph, Prince of Egypt

Sabbath Afternoon, June 11

The part which Joseph acted in connection with the scenes of the gloomy prison, was that which raised him finally to prosperity and honor. God designed that he should obtain an experience by temptations, adversity, and hardships, to prepare him to fill an exalted position.

Joseph carried his religion everywhere, and this was the secret of his unwavering fidelity.

He who receives Christ by living faith has a living connection with God, and is a vessel unto honor. He carries with him the atmosphere of heaven, which is the grace of God, a treasure that the world cannot buy. He who is in living connection with God may be in humble stations, yet his moral worth is as precious as was that of Joseph and Daniel, who were recognized by heathen kings as men with whom was the Spirit of God.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 1097, 1098.

[Joseph's brothers] sold Joseph as a slave, and they were fearful that God designed to punish them by suffering them to become slaves.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 156.

[Joseph's brothers] humbly confessed their wrongs which they had committed against Joseph, and entreated his forgiveness, and [were] greatly rejoiced to find that he was alive; for they had suffered remorse, and great distress of mind, since their cruelty toward him. And now as they knew that they were not guilty of his blood, their troubled minds were relieved.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 167.

The evidences of a genuine work of grace on the heart are to be found not in feeling, but in the life. "By their fruits," Christ declared, "ye shall know them." . . .

The work of grace upon the heart is not an instantaneous work. It is effected by continuous, daily watching and believing the promises of God. The repentant, believing one, who cherishes faith and earnestly desires the renewing grace of Christ, God will not turn away empty. He will give him grace. And ministering angels will aid him as he perseveres in his efforts to advance.—*Evangelism*, p. 287.

When the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God's holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. The "Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," illumines the secret chambers of the soul, and the hidden things of darkness are made manifest. John 1:9. Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart. The sinner has a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and feels the terror of appearing, in his own guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, the joy of purity; he longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven.—*Steps to Christ*, p. 24.

Sunday, June 12: Joseph's Rise to Power

Joseph traveled throughout all the land of Egypt, giving command to build immense store-houses, and using his clear head and excellent judgment to aid in the preparations to secure food, necessary for the long years of famine. At length the seven years of plenteousness in the land of Egypt ended. "And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said, and the dearth was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. And Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 152, 153.

Joseph was faithful to God, and his fidelity was a constant testimony to the true faith. It was to quench this light that Satan worked through the envy of Joseph's brothers to cause him to be sold as a slave in a heathen land. God overruled events, however, so that the knowledge of Himself should be given to the people of Egypt. Both in the house of Potiphar and in the prison Joseph received an education and training that, with the fear of God, prepared him for his high position as prime minister of the nation. From the palace of the Pharaohs his influence was felt throughout the land, and the knowledge of God spread far and wide. The Israelites in Egypt also became prosperous and wealthy, and such as were true to God exerted a widespread influence.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 332.

To the people of Egypt and of all the nations connected with that powerful kingdom, God manifested Himself through Joseph. Why did the Lord choose to exalt Joseph so highly among the Egyptians? He might have provided some other way for the accomplishment of His purposes toward the children of Jacob; but He desired to make Joseph a light, and He placed him in the palace of the king, that the heavenly illumination might extend far and near. By his wisdom and justice, by the purity and benevolence of his daily life, by his devotion to the interests of the people

—and that people a nation of idolaters—Joseph was a representative of Christ. In their benefactor, to whom all Egypt turned with gratitude and praise, that heathen people were to behold the love of their Creator and Redeemer. So in Moses also God placed a light beside the throne of the earth's greatest kingdom, that all who would, might learn of the true and living God. And all this light was given to the Egyptians before the hand of God was stretched out over them in judgments.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 368, 369.

Monday, June 13: Joseph Confronts His Brothers

Jacob's sons came with the crowd of buyers to purchase corn of Joseph, and they "bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth." And Joseph knew his brethren, but he appeared not to know them, and spake roughly unto them. "And he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan, to buy food. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies. To see the nakedness of the land ye are come."

They assured Joseph that their only errand into Egypt was to buy food. Joseph again charges them with being spies. He wished to learn if they possessed the same haughty spirit they had when he was with them, and he was anxious to draw from them some information in regard to his father and Benjamin. . . .

The three days of confinement were days of bitter sorrow with Jacob's sons. They reflected upon their past wrong course, especially their cruelty to Joseph. They knew if they were convicted of being spies, and they could not bring evidence to clear themselves, they would all have to die, or become slaves. They doubted whether any effort any one of them might make would cause their father to consent to have Benjamin go from him, after the cruel death, as he thought, Joseph had suffered. They sold Joseph as a slave, and they were fearful that God designed to punish them by suffering them to become slaves. Joseph considers that his father and the families of his brethren, may be suffering for food, and he is convinced that his brethren have repented of their cruel treatment of him, and that they would in no case treat Benjamin as they had treated him.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 154–156.

Being justified by Christ, the receiver of truth is constrained to make an entire surrender to God, and is admitted into the school of Christ, that he may learn of Him who is meek and lowly of heart. A knowledge of the love of God is shed abroad in his heart. He exclaims, Oh, what love! What condescension! Grasping the rich promises by faith, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature. His heart being emptied of self, the waters of life flow in; the glory of the Lord shines forth. Perpetually looking unto

Jesus, the human is assimilated by the divine. The believer is changed into His likeness. . . . The human character is changed into the divine.

Christ looks upon His people in their purity and perfection as the reward of all His sufferings, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory—Christ the great center, from whom radiates all glory.—*Our High Calling*, p. 203.

Tuesday, June 14: Joseph and Benjamin

As [Jacob's] sons were about to leave him to go on their doubtful journey, their aged father arose, and, while standing in their midst, raised his hands to heaven, and entreated the Lord to go with them, and pronounced upon them a gracious benediction. "And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

"And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin, and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph." And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he could scarcely restrain his brotherly feelings of love. He gave direction to make preparation for his brethren to dine with him. When they were taken into Joseph's house they were afraid that it was for the purpose of calling them to account, because of the money found in their sacks. And they thought that it might have been intentionally placed there for the purpose of finding occasion against them to make them slaves, and that they were brought into the ruler's house to better accomplish this object.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 159, 160.

The Bible has little to say in praise of men. Little space is given to recounting the virtues of even the best men who have ever lived. This silence is not without purpose; it is not without a lesson. All the good qualities that men possess are the gift of God; their good deeds are performed by the grace of God through Christ. Since they owe all to God the glory of whatever they are or do belongs to Him alone; they are but instruments in His hands. More than this—as all the lessons of Bible history teach—it is a perilous thing to praise or exalt men; for if one comes to lose sight of his entire dependence on God, and to trust to his own strength, he is sure to fall. Man is contending with foes who are stronger than he. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places." Ephesians 6:12, margin. It is impossible for us in our own strength to maintain the conflict; and whatever diverts the mind from God, whatever leads to self-exaltation or to self-dependence, is

surely preparing the way for our overthrow. The tenor of the Bible is to inculcate distrust of human power and to encourage trust in divine power. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 717.

Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, “I am Christ’s; I have given myself to Him;” and ask Him to give you His Spirit and keep you by His grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him. The apostle says, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” Colossians 2:6.—*Steps to Christ*, p. 52.

Wednesday, June 15: The Divination Cup

Judah had pledged himself to be surety for Benjamin. “And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph’s house; for he was yet there, and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?” Joseph asked this question to draw forth from his brethren an acknowledgment of their past wrong course, that their true feelings might be more fully revealed. He did not claim any power of divination, but was willing his brethren should believe that he could read the secret acts of their lives. “And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants. Behold, we are my lord’s servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.” Judah told his brethren that God had found out their iniquity for selling their brother in Egypt, and was now returning upon them their transgressions, by permitting them to become slaves also.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 163, 164.

As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. Christ knew that He would have to suffer, yet He became man’s substitute. As soon as Adam sinned, the Son of God presented Himself as surety for the human race. . . .

. . . “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” The palms of His hands bear the marks of the wounds that He received. If we are wounded and bruised, if we meet with difficulties that are hard to manage, let us remember how much Christ suffered for us. . . .

Satan declared that human beings could not live without sin. Christ passed over the ground where Adam stumbled and fell, and by a sinless life placed the human race on vantage ground, that every one might stand before the Father, accepted in the Beloved.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 13.

Laborers in the cause of truth should present the righteousness of Christ, not as new light, but as precious light that has for a time been lost sight of by the people. We are to accept of Christ as our personal Saviour, and He imputes unto us the righteousness of God in Christ. Let us repeat and make prominent the truth that John has portrayed, “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 John 4:10).

In the love of God has been opened the most marvelous vein of precious truth, and the treasures of the grace of Christ are laid open before the church and the world. . . . What love is this, what marvelous, unfathomable love that would lead Christ to die for us while we were yet sinners. What a loss it is to the soul who understands the strong claims of the law, and who yet fails to understand the grace of Christ which doth much more abound.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 155, 156.

Thursday, June 16: “ ‘I Am Joseph Your Brother’ ”

Joseph was satisfied. He had proved his brethren, and had seen in them the fruits of true repentance for their sins, and he was so deeply affected that he could not longer conceal his feelings, and requested to be left alone with his brethren. He then gave vent to his long-suppressed feelings and wept aloud. . . .

His brethren could not answer him for astonishment. They could not really believe that the ruler of Egypt was their brother Joseph whom they had envied, and would have murdered, but finally were satisfied to sell as a slave. All their ill treatment of their brother painfully passed before them, and especially his dreams, which they had despised, and had labored to prevent their fulfillment. . . .

As Joseph saw the confusion of his brethren, he said to them, “Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.” He nobly sought to make this occasion as easy for his brethren as possible. He had no desire to increase their embarrassment by censuring them. He felt that they had suffered enough for their cruelty to him, and he endeavored to comfort them. He said to them, “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. . . . So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 165.

Study the history of Joseph and of Daniel. The Lord did not prevent the plottings of men who sought to do them harm; but He caused all these devices to work for good to His servants who amidst trial and conflict preserved their faith and loyalty.

So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be

accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 487.

We are brought into sympathy with Christ through the fellowship of His sufferings. Every act of self-sacrifice for the good of others strengthens the spirit of beneficence in the giver's heart, allying him more closely to the Redeemer of the world. . . .

If you will go to work as Christ designs that His disciples shall, and win souls for Him, you will feel the need of a deeper experience and a greater knowledge in divine things, and will hunger and thirst after righteousness. You will plead with God, and your faith will be strengthened, and your soul will drink deeper drafts at the well of salvation. Encountering opposition and trials will drive you to the Bible and prayer. You will grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ, and will develop a rich experience.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 79, 80.

Friday, June 17: For Further Reading

Lift Him Up, “The Hope of the Ages,” p. 27;
The Faith I Live By, “He Died for Us,” p. 50.

Lesson 13

Israel in Egypt

Sabbath Afternoon, June 18

On account of the service that Joseph had rendered the Egyptian nation, [the children of Jacob] were not only granted a part of the country as a home, but were exempted from taxation, and liberally supplied with food during the continuance of the famine. The king publicly acknowledged that it was through the merciful interposition of the God of Joseph that Egypt enjoyed plenty while other nations were perishing from famine. He saw, too, that Joseph's management had greatly enriched the kingdom, and his gratitude surrounded the family of Jacob with royal favor.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 241.

The dealings of God with His people should be often repeated. How frequently were the waymarks set up by the Lord in His dealings with ancient Israel! Lest they should forget the history of the past, He commanded Moses to frame these events into song, that parents might teach them to their children. They were to gather up memorials and to lay them up in sight. Special pains were taken to preserve them, that when the children should inquire concerning these things, the whole story might be repeated. Thus the providential dealings and the marked goodness and mercy of God in His care and deliverance of His people were kept in mind. We are exhorted to call to “remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.” Hebrews 10:32. For His people in this generation the Lord has wrought as a wonder-working God. The past history of the cause of God needs to be often brought before the people, young and old. We need often to recount God's goodness and to praise Him for His wonderful works.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 364, 365.

In the providence of God, we are daily brought into connection with the unconverted. By His own right hand God is preparing the way before

us, in order that His work may progress rapidly. As colaborers with Him, we have a sacred work to do. We are to have travail of soul for those who are in high places; we are to extend to them the gracious invitation to come to the marriage feast.

Although now almost wholly in the possession of wicked men, all the world, with its riches and treasures, belongs to God. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” . . . O that Christians might realize more and still more fully that it is their privilege and their duty, while cherishing right principles, to take advantage of every heaven-sent opportunity for advancing God’s kingdom in this world!—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 186.

Sunday, June 19: Jacob Goes to Joseph

Upon reaching Egypt the company proceeded directly to the land of Goshen. Thither came Joseph in his chariot of state, attended by a princely retinue. The splendor of his surroundings and the dignity of his position were alike forgotten; one thought alone filled his mind, one longing thrilled his heart. As he beheld the travelers approaching, the love whose yearnings had for so many long years been repressed, would no longer be controlled. He sprang from his chariot and hastened forward to bid his father welcome. “And he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 233.

Pharaoh appreciated [Joseph’s] wisdom in the management of all things connected with the kingdom, especially in the preparations for the long years of famine which came upon the land of Egypt. He felt that the whole kingdom was indebted for their prosperity to the wise management of Joseph; and, as a token of his gratitude, he said to Joseph, “The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell. . . .”

“And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father’s household, with bread, according to their families.”—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 103, 104.

Though the Egyptians had so long rejected the knowledge of God, the Lord still gave them opportunity for repentance. In the days of Joseph, Egypt had been an asylum for Israel; God had been honored in the kindness shown His people; and now the long-suffering One, slow to anger, and full of compassion, gave each judgment time to do its work; the Egyptians, cursed through the very objects they had worshiped, had evidence of the power of Jehovah, and all who would, might submit to God and escape His judgments.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 333.

Caste is hateful to God. He ignores everything of this character. In His sight the souls of all men are of equal value. He “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us.” Without distinction of age, or rank, or nationality, or religious privilege, all are invited to come unto Him and live. . . . “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free.” . . . “The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Acts 17:26, 27; Galatians 3:28; Romans 10:11-13.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 403.

Monday, June 20: Jacob Settles in Egypt

Not long after their arrival Joseph brought his father also to be presented to the king. The patriarch was a stranger in royal courts; but amid the sublime scenes of nature he had communed with a mightier Monarch; and now, in conscious superiority, he raised his hands and blessed Pharaoh.

In his first greeting to Joseph, Jacob had spoken as if, with this joyful ending to his long anxiety and sorrow, he was ready to die. But seventeen years were yet to be granted him in the peaceful retirement of Goshen. These years were in happy contrast to those that had preceded them. He saw in his sons evidence of true repentance; he saw his family surrounded by all the conditions needful for the development of a great nation; and his faith grasped the sure promise of their future establishment in Canaan. He himself was surrounded with every token of love and favor that the prime minister of Egypt could bestow; and happy in the society of his long-lost son, he passed down gently and peacefully to the grave.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 233.

The continuity of Christian influence is the secret of its power, and this depends on the steadfastness of your manifestation of the character of Christ. Help those who have erred, by telling them of your experiences. Show how, when you made grave mistakes, patience, kindness, and helpfulness on the part of your fellow workers gave you courage and hope.

Until the judgment you will never know the influence of a kind, considerate course toward the inconsistent, the unreasonable, the unworthy. When we meet with ingratitude and betrayal of sacred trusts, we are roused to show our contempt or indignation. This the guilty expect; they are prepared for it. But kind forbearance takes them by surprise and often awakens their better impulses and arouses a longing for a nobler life.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 494, 495.

The Laodicean message is applicable to the church at this time. Do you believe this message? Have you hearts that feel? Or are you constantly

saying, We are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing? Is it in vain that the declaration of eternal truth has been given to this nation to be carried to all the nations of the world? God has chosen a people and made them the repositories of truth weighty with eternal results. To them has been given the light that must illuminate the world. Has God made a mistake? Are we indeed His chosen instrumentalities? Are we the men and women who are to bear to the world the messages of Revelation fourteen, to proclaim the message of salvation to those who are standing on the brink of ruin? Do we act as if we were?

The Laodicean message applies to all who profess to keep the law of God, and yet are not doers of it. We are not to be selfish in anything. Every phase of the Christian life is to be a representation of the life of Christ.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 961, 962.

Tuesday, June 21: Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons

As he felt death approaching, [Jacob] sent for Joseph. . . .

[An] important matter demanded attention; the sons of Joseph were to be formally instated among the children of Israel. Joseph, coming for a last interview with his father, brought with him Ephraim and Manasseh. . . . It was Joseph's desire . . . that they should unite with their own people. He manifested his faith in the covenant promise, in behalf of his sons renouncing all the honors that the court of Egypt offered, for a place among the despised shepherd tribes, to whom had been entrusted the oracles of God.

Said Jacob, "Thy two sons, Ephraim, and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine." They were to be adopted as his own, and to become the heads of separate tribes. Thus one of the birthright privileges, which Reuben had forfeited, was to fall to Joseph—a double portion in Israel. . . .

. . . As [Joseph's sons] came nearer, the patriarch embraced and kissed them, solemnly laying his hands upon their heads in benediction. Then he uttered the prayer, "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." There was no spirit of self-dependence, no reliance upon human power or cunning now. God had been his preserver and support. There was no complaint of the evil days in the past. Its trials and sorrows were no longer regarded as things that were "against" him. Memory recalled only His mercy and loving-kindness who had been with him throughout his pilgrimage.

The blessing ended, Jacob gave his son the assurance—leaving for the generations to come, through long years of bondage and sorrow, this testimony to his faith—"Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 234, 235.

The hope of Israel was embodied in the promise made at the time of the call of Abraham, and afterward repeated again and again to his posterity,

“In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 12:3. As the purpose of God for the redemption of the race was unfolded to Abraham, the Sun of Righteousness shone upon his heart, and his darkness was scattered. And when, at last, the Saviour Himself walked and talked among the sons of men, He bore witness to the Jews of the patriarch’s bright hope of deliverance through the coming of a Redeemer. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day,” Christ declared; “and he saw it, and was glad.” John 8:56.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 683.

Wednesday, June 22: Jacob Blesses His Sons

At the last all the sons of Jacob were gathered about his dying bed. And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, “Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father,” “that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.” Often and anxiously he had thought of their future, and had endeavored to picture to himself the history of the different tribes. Now as his children waited to receive his last blessing the Spirit of Inspiration rested upon him, and before him in prophetic vision the future of his descendants was unfolded. One after another the names of his sons were mentioned, the character of each was described, and the future history of the tribes was briefly foretold. . . .

The priesthood was apportioned to Levi, the kingdom and the Messianic promise to Judah, and the double portion of the inheritance to Joseph. The tribe of Reuben never rose to any eminence in Israel; it was not so numerous as Judah, Joseph, or Dan, and was among the first that were carried into captivity.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 235.

Jacob had ever been a man of deep and ardent affection; his love for his sons was strong and tender, and his dying testimony to them was not the utterance of partiality or resentment. He had forgiven them all, and he loved them to the last. His paternal tenderness would have found expression only in words of encouragement and hope; but the power of God rested upon him, and under the influence of Inspiration he was constrained to declare the truth, however painful.

The last blessings pronounced, Jacob repeated the charge concerning his burial place: “I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers . . . in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah.” “There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.” Thus the last act of his life was to manifest his faith in God’s promise.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 237.

Not all in this world have taken sides with the enemy against God. Not all have become disloyal. There are a faithful few who are true to God; for John writes: “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the

faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12. Soon the battle will be waged fiercely between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. Soon everything that can be shaken will be shaken, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain. . . .

. . . God’s tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12-18. They are to take their stand on the living word: “It is written.” This is the only foundation upon which they can stand securely. Those who have broken their covenant with God will in that day be without God and without hope.

The worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandment, since this is the sign of God’s creative power and the witness to His claim upon man’s reverence and homage.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 15, 16.

Thursday, June 23: The Hope of the Promised Land

Jacob and his sons had brought their flocks and herds with them to Egypt, where they had greatly increased. Before leaving Egypt, the people, by the direction of Moses, claimed a recompense for their unpaid labor; and the Egyptians were too eager to be freed from their presence to refuse them. The bondmen went forth laden with the spoil of their oppressors.

That day completed the history revealed to Abraham in prophetic vision centuries before: “Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.” Genesis 15:13, 14. [See appendix, note 3.] The four hundred years had been fulfilled. “And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.” In their departure from Egypt the Israelites bore with them a precious legacy, in the bones of Joseph, which had so long awaited the fulfillment of God’s promise, and which, during the dark years of bondage, had been a reminder of Israel’s deliverance.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 281.

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.

All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying.

He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord’s permission, and “all things” that are permitted “work together for good to them that love God.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 64.

[The] hope of redemption through the advent of the Son of God as Saviour and King, has never become extinct in the hearts of men. From the beginning there have been some whose faith has reached out beyond the shadows of the present to the realities of the future. Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—through these and other worthies the Lord has preserved the precious revealings of His will. And it was thus that to the children of Israel, the chosen people through whom was to be given to the world the promised Messiah, God imparted a knowledge of the requirements of His law, and of the salvation to be accomplished through the atoning sacrifice of His beloved Son.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 682, 683.

Friday, June 24: For Further Reading

This Day With God, “Set Your Affections on Heaven,” p. 290;
My Life Today, “Doubt Not,” p. 185.