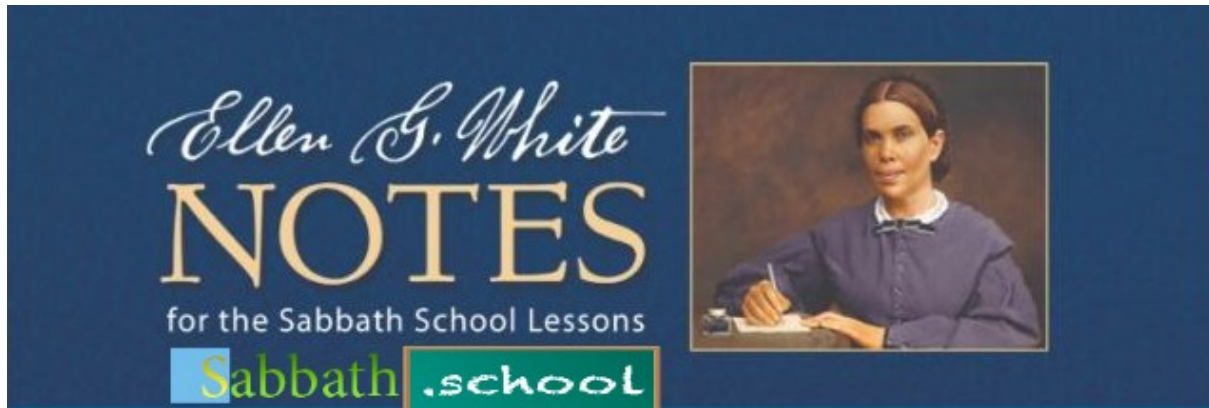


# EGW Notes - Lesson 10

## Lessons of the Past



### Sabbath Afternoon, March 2

A study of the history of the children of Israel will help us to learn lessons that will keep us from repeating the mistakes that spoiled their record. The Lord wonderfully delivered this people from their bondage to an oppressive king, and Himself took charge of their vast army. He guided them by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night—a cloud which enshrouded His own presence. He provided them with food in the wilderness; and men did eat angels' food.

Soon after Israel's encampment at Sinai, Moses was called up into the mount to meet with God. Alone he climbed the steep and rugged path, and drew near to the cloud that marked the place of Jehovah's presence. Israel was now to be taken into close and peculiar relationship to the Most High God. As a nation they were to come under the special government of God.—*This Day With God*, p. 237.

We should meditate upon the Scriptures, thinking soberly and candidly upon the things that pertain to our eternal salvation. The infinite mercy and love of Jesus, the sacrifice made in our behalf, call for most serious and solemn reflection. We should dwell upon the character of our dear Redeemer and Intercessor. We should seek to comprehend the meaning of the plan of salvation. We should meditate upon the mission of Him who came to save His people from their sins.

By constantly contemplating heavenly themes, our faith and love will grow stronger. Our prayers will be more and more acceptable to God because they will be more and more mixed with faith and love. They will be more intelligent and fervent. There will be more constant confidence in Jesus, and you will have a daily, living experience in the willingness and power of Christ to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 732.

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.

**Sunday, March 3**

## **The Lord's Unstoppable Faithfulness**

The Word of God is to be the man of our counsel, and is to guide our experience. The lessons of Old Testament history, if faithfully studied, will teach us how this can be. Christ, enshrouded in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, was the guide and the light of the children of Israel in their wilderness wandering. Here was an unerring Guide.

In all their experiences, God was trying to teach them obedience to their heavenly Guide, and faith in His power to deliver them. Their deliverance from affliction in Egypt, and their passage through the Red Sea, revealed to them His power to save. When they rebelled against Him, and went contrary to His will, God punished them. When they persisted in their rebellion, and were determined to have their own way, God gave them that for which they asked, and in this way showed them that, that which He withheld from them, He withheld for their own good. Every judgment that came as a result of their

murmurings was a lesson to that vast multitude, that sorrow and suffering are always the result of transgression of the laws of God.—*This Day With God*, p. 254.

Says the psalmist: “They tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, He smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can He give bread also? can He provide flesh for His people? Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth.” Psalm 78:18-21. Murmuring and tumults had been frequent during the journey from the Red Sea to Sinai, but in pity for their ignorance and blindness God had not then visited the sin with judgments. But since that time He had revealed Himself to them at Horeb. They had received great light, as they had been witnesses to the majesty, the power, and the mercy of God; and their unbelief and discontent incurred the greater guilt. Furthermore, they had covenanted to accept Jehovah as their king and to obey His authority. Their murmuring was now rebellion, and as such it must receive prompt and signal punishment, if Israel was to be preserved from anarchy and ruin. “The fire of Jehovah burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.” The most guilty of the complainers were slain by lightning from the cloud.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 379.

The repeated murmurings of the Israelites, and the visitations of God’s wrath because of their transgressions, are recorded in sacred history for the

benefit of God's people who should afterward live upon the earth, but more especially to prove a warning to those who should live near the close of time. Also their acts of devotion, their energy and liberality in bringing their free-will offerings to Moses are recorded for the benefit of the people of God. Their example in preparing material for the tabernacle so cheerfully is an example for all who truly love the worship of God.—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 152.

**Monday, March 4**

## **Remembering History and the Praise of God**

The history of the Old Testament was recorded for the benefit of those who should live in the generations following. The lessons of the New Testament are as greatly needed. Here again Christ is the instructor, leading His people to seek that wisdom that cometh from above, and to gain that instruction in righteousness that will mold the character after the divine similitude. Both Old and New Testament Scriptures teach the principles of obedience to the commandments of God as the terms of securing that life which measures with the life of God, for it is through obedience that we become partakers of the divine nature, and learn to escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Therefore its maxims are to be studied, its commands obeyed, its principles, which are more precious than gold, brought into the daily life.—*Letter 342*, September 2, 1907, to the

workers in Southern California.

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. We need often to recount God’s goodness and to praise Him for His wonderful works.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 364.

Men, women, and youth, God requires you to possess moral courage, steadiness of purpose, fortitude and perseverance, minds that cannot take the assertions of another, but which will investigate for themselves before receiving or rejecting, that will study and weigh evidence, and take it to the Lord in prayer. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” Now the condition: “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea

driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.” This petition for wisdom is not to be a meaningless prayer, out of mind as soon as finished. It is a prayer that expresses the strong, earnest desire of the heart, arising from a conscious lack of wisdom to determine the will of God.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 130.

**Tuesday, March 5**

## **Remembering History and Repentance**

All who profess to be children of God I would invite to consider the history of the Israelites, as recorded in the one hundred and fifth, the one hundred and sixth, and the one hundred and seventh psalms. By carefully studying these scriptures, we may be able to appreciate more fully the goodness, mercy, and love of our God. . . .

Why did ancient Israel so easily forget God’s dealings? The people did not retain in their memory His works of greatness and power or His words of warning. Had they remembered His wondrous dealings with them they would not have received reproof. . . .

But the children of Israel forgot God, whose they were by creation and by redemption. After seeing all His wondrous works, they tempted Him.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 107–114.

Cannot we who are living in the time of the end realize the importance of the apostle’s words: “Take heed,

brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God”?

Upon us is shining the accumulated light of past ages. The record of Israel’s forgetfulness has been preserved for our enlightenment. In this age God has set His hand to gather unto Himself a people from every nation, kindred, and tongue. In the advent movement He has wrought for His heritage, even as He wrought for the Israelites in leading them from Egypt. In the great disappointment of 1844 the faith of His people was tested as was that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had the Adventists in the early days still trusted to the guiding Hand that had been with them in their past experience, they would have seen of the salvation of God. If all who had labored unitedly in the work of 1844 had received the third angel’s message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work would have been completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 115.

Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. The work that we have to do on our part is plainly set before us: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve



the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:16, 17.—*Steps to Christ*, p. 39.

**Wednesday, March 6**

## **The Parable of the Lord's Vine**

The Jews had always regarded the vine as the most noble of plants, and a type of all that was powerful, excellent, and fruitful. Israel had been represented as a vine which God had planted in the Promised Land. The Jews based their hope of salvation on the fact of their connection with Israel. But Jesus says, I am the real Vine. Think not that through a connection with Israel you may become partakers of the life of God, and inheritors of His promise. Through Me alone is spiritual life received.

On the hills of Palestine our heavenly Father had planted this goodly Vine, and He Himself was the husbandman. Many were attracted by the beauty of this Vine, and declared its heavenly origin. But to the leaders in Israel it appeared as a root out of a dry ground. They took the plant, and bruised it, and trampled it under their unholy feet. Their thought was to destroy it forever. But the heavenly Husbandman never lost sight of His plant. After men thought they had killed it, He took it, and replanted it on the other side of the wall. The vine stock was to be no longer visible. It was hidden from the rude assaults of men. But the branches of the Vine hung over the wall. They were to represent the Vine. Through them grafts might still be united to the Vine. From them fruit has been obtained. There has been a harvest which the passers-by have plucked.—*The*

*Desire of Ages*, p. 675.

Jesus Christ has given Himself as a complete offering in behalf of every fallen son and daughter of Adam. O what humiliation He bore! How He descended, step after step, lower and lower in the path of humiliation, yet He never degraded His soul with one foul blot of sin! All this He suffered, that He might lift you up, cleanse, refine, and ennoble you, and place you as a joint heir with Himself upon His throne. How shall you make your calling and election sure? What is the way of salvation? Christ says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." However sinful, however guilty you may be, you are called, you are chosen. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." Not one will be forced against his will to come to Jesus Christ. The Majesty of heaven, the only-begotten Son of the true and living God, opened the way for you to come to Him, by giving His life as a sacrifice on Calvary's cross. . . . The blood of Jesus is a never-failing passport, by which all your petitions may find access to the throne of God.—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 251.

**Thursday, March 7**

## **The Lord's Supremacy in History**

From a race of slaves the Israelites had been exalted above all peoples to be the peculiar treasure of the King of kings. God had separated them from the world, that He might commit to them a sacred trust. He had made them the depositaries of His law, and He purposed, through them, to preserve among men the knowledge of

Himself. Thus the light of heaven was to shine out to a world enshrouded in darkness, and a voice was to be heard appealing to all peoples to turn from their idolatry to serve the living God. If the Israelites would be true to their trust, they would become a power in the world. God would be their defense, and He would exalt them above all other nations. His light and truth would be revealed through them, and they would stand forth under His wise and holy rule as an example of the superiority of His worship over every form of idolatry.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 314.

By their sins the Israelites were separated from God; His strength was removed from them, and they could no longer prevail against their enemies. Thus they were brought into subjection to the very nations that through God they might have subdued.

“They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt,” “and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.” “They provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images.” Therefore the Lord “forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among them; and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy’s hand.” Judges 2:12; Psalm 78:52, 58, 60, 61. Yet He did not utterly forsake His people. There was ever a remnant who were true to Jehovah; and from time to time the Lord raised up faithful and valiant men to put down idolatry and to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. But when the deliverer was dead, and the people were released from his authority, they would gradually return to their idols.

And thus the story of backsliding and chastisement, of confession and deliverance, was repeated again and again.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 544, 545.

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. . . .

O, that they might arouse from their spiritual lethargy, and now acquaint themselves with God! The world is blinding their eyes from seeing Him who is invisible. They are unable to discern the most precious things that are of eternal interest, but view the truth of God in so dim a light that it seems of little value to them. The merest atom concerning their temporal interests assumes magnified proportions, while the things concerning eternity are dropped out of their reckoning.—*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 220, 221.

**Friday, March 8**

## **For Further Reading**

*In Heavenly Places*, "Jesus Our Advocate," p. 264;

*The Ministry of Healing*, "Personality of God Revealed in Christ," p. 419.