

Lesson 2

The Genesis Foundation

Sabbath Afternoon, April 5

All who join the ranks of Sabbathkeepers should become diligent Bible students, that they may know the pillars and groundwork of the truth. They should study prophetic history, which has brought us down point by point to where we are at the present time. This is God's plan for our school. Young men should attend who desire to become educated for any line of work, who have capabilities, and see the necessity of learning more and still more where we stand today in prophetic history, uniting link after link in the prophetic chain, even from Genesis to Revelation. Christ is the Alpha, the first link, and the Omega, the last link, of the gospel chain, which is welded in Revelation. — "Ellen White's Confidence in Her Calling," in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 171.

The Son of God, heaven's glorious Commander, was touched with pity for the fallen race. His heart was moved with infinite compassion as the woes of the lost world rose up before Him. But divine love had conceived a plan whereby man might be redeemed. The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner. In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, satisfy its claims. Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression. None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven. . . . Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race.

Before the Father He pleaded in the sinner's behalf, while the host of heaven awaited the result with an intensity of interest that words cannot express. . . . The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8); yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. But "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. Oh, the mystery of redemption! the love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love which "passeth knowledge"? Through endless ages immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 63, 64.

The Old Testament, containing the prophecies of the coming of Christ, is now made of small account. The cry now is, "The Christ, the Christ! The gospel, the gospel!" But the gospel is taught all the way through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. The gospel is revealed in all the prophecies of the first advent of Christ as the Saviour of humanity. Every act of the old dispensation to turn men and women away from sin or to bring them forgiveness was done with reference to the Saviour who was to come. He was the Steppingstone by which humanity was to be exalted. — "Steppingstone," in *Jesus, Name Above All Names*, p. 362.

Sunday, April 6

The Principle of “First Mention”

“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.” Genesis 3:15. The divine sentence pronounced against Satan after the fall of man was also a prophecy, embracing all the ages to the close of time and foreshadowing the great conflict to engage all the races of men who should live upon the earth.

God declares: “I will put enmity.” This enmity is not naturally entertained. When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil, and he was in harmony, and not at variance, with Satan. There exists naturally no enmity between sinful man and the originator of sin. Both became evil through apostasy. . . . Had not God specially interposed, Satan and man would have entered into an alliance against Heaven; and instead of cherishing enmity against Satan, the whole human family would have been united in opposition to God. . . .

It is the grace that Christ implants in the soul which creates in man enmity against Satan. Without this converting grace and renewing power, man would continue the captive of Satan, a servant ever ready to do his bidding. But the new principle in the soul creates conflict where hitherto had been peace. The power which Christ imparts enables man to resist the tyrant and usurper. Whoever is seen to abhor sin instead of loving it, whoever resists and conquers those passions that have held sway within, displays the operation of a principle wholly from above. —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 505, 506.

The plan by which alone man’s salvation could be secured, involved all heaven in its infinite sacrifice. . . . He was to stand between the sinner and the penalty of sin. . . . He would leave His high position as the Majesty of heaven, appear upon earth and humble Himself as a man, and by His own experience become acquainted with the sorrows and temptations which man would have to endure. All this would be necessary in order that He might be able to succor them that should be tempted. Hebrews 2:18. When His mission as a teacher should be ended, He must be delivered into the hands of wicked men and be subjected to every insult and torture that Satan could inspire them to inflict. He must die the cruelest of deaths, lifted up between the heavens and the earth as a guilty sinner. He must pass long hours of agony so terrible that angels could not look upon it, but would veil their faces from the sight. He must endure anguish of soul, the hiding of His Father’s face, while the guilt of transgression—the weight of the sins of the whole world—should be upon Him.

Christ assured the angels that by His death He would ransom many, and would destroy him who had the power of death. He would recover the kingdom which man had lost by transgression, and the redeemed were to inherit it with Him, and dwell therein forever. Sin and sinners would be blotted out, nevermore to disturb the peace of heaven or earth. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 64, 65.

Monday, April 7

Understanding God's Love

Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love. Our Father in heaven is the source of life, of wisdom, and of joy. Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of nature. Think of their marvelous adaptation to the needs and happiness, not only of man, but of all living creatures. The sunshine and the rain, that gladden and refresh the earth, the hills and seas and plains, all speak to us of the Creator's love. It is God who supplies the daily needs of all His creatures. . . .

God made man perfectly holy and happy; and the fair earth, as it came from the Creator's hand, bore no blight of decay or shadow of the curse. It is transgression of God's law—the law of love—that has brought woe and death. Yet even amid the suffering that results from sin, God's love is revealed. It is written that God cursed the ground for man's sake. Genesis 3:17. The thorn and the thistle—the difficulties and trials that make his life one of toil and care—were appointed for his good as a part of the training needful in God's plan for his uplifting from the ruin and degradation that sin has wrought. The world, though fallen, is not all sorrow and misery. In nature itself are messages of hope and comfort. There are flowers upon the thistles, and the thorns are covered with roses.

"God is love" is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green—all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy. —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 9, 10.

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 761, 762.

As we study the sufferings of Christ, the results of sin are so distressing to us that we cry out to the Lord to take away our sins. As we continue to look, we become more capable of enduring the sight of what Christ suffered, and we realize more and more clearly His love for us. The cross of Christ is invested with a wonderful attraction and unlimited power; for in the suffering connected with the crucifixion scene, God's love becomes to us more and more impressive. —"The Measure of God's Love," *Signs of the Times*, February 22, 1899, par. 2.

Tuesday, April 8

Isaac's Question: Where Is the Lamb?

Heavenly beings were witnesses of the scene as the faith of Abraham and the submission of Isaac were tested. . . . 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*, p. 151.

None among the hearers, and not even the speaker himself, discerned the import of these words, "the Lamb of God." Upon Mount Moriah, Abraham had heard the question of his son, "My father, . . . where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" The father answered, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Genesis 22:7, 8. And in the ram divinely provided in the place of Isaac, Abraham saw a symbol of Him who was to die for the sins of men. The Holy Spirit through Isaiah, taking up the illustration, prophesied of the Saviour, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," "and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:7, 6); but the people of Israel had not understood the lesson. . . . God desired to teach them that from His own love comes the gift which reconciles them to Himself. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 112, 113.

Our Heavenly Father surrendered his beloved Son to the agonies of the crucifixion. Legions of angels witnessed the humiliation and soul-anguish of the Son of God, but were not permitted to interpose as in the case of Isaac. No voice was heard to stay the sacrifice. God's dear Son, the world's Redeemer, was insulted, mocked at, derided, and tortured, until he bowed his head in death. What greater proof can the Infinite One give us of his divine love and pity. —"The Faith of Abraham," *Signs of the Times*, April 1, 1875, par. 23.

Wednesday, April 9

Dealing With Death

The murder of Abel was the first example of the enmity that God had declared would exist between the serpent and the seed of the woman—between Satan and his subjects and Christ and His followers. Through man's sin, Satan had gained control of the human race, but Christ would enable them to cast off his yoke. Whenever, through faith in the Lamb of God, a soul renounces the service of sin, Satan's wrath is kindled. The holy life of Abel testified against Satan's claim that it is impossible for man to keep God's law. When Cain, moved by the spirit of the wicked one, saw that he could not control Abel, he was so enraged that he destroyed his life. And wherever there are any who will stand in vindication of the righteousness of the law of God, the same spirit will be manifested against them. It is the spirit that through all the ages has set up the stake and kindled the burning pile for the disciples of Christ. But the cruelties heaped upon the follower of Jesus are instigated by Satan and his hosts because they cannot force him to submit to their control. It is the rage of a vanquished foe. Every martyr of Jesus has died a conqueror. Says the prophet, "They overcame him ["that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan"] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Revelation 12:11, 9. — *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 77.

In the midst of Eden grew the tree of life, whose fruit had the power of perpetuating life. Had Adam remained obedient to God, he would have continued to enjoy free access to this tree, and would have lived forever. But when he sinned, he was cut off from partaking of the tree of life, and he became subject to death. The divine sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," points to the utter extinction of life.

Immortality, promised to man on condition of obedience, had been forfeited by transgression. Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the fallen race, had not God, by the sacrifice of his Son, brought immortality within their reach. While "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Christ "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." [Romans 5:12; 2 Timothy 1:10.] And only through Christ can immortality be obtained. Said Jesus, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." [John 3:36.] Every man may come in possession of this priceless blessing if he will comply with the conditions. All "who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality," will receive eternal life. [Romans 2:7.] —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 532, 533.

Thursday, April 10

The Serpent

The serpent plucked the fruit of the forbidden tree and placed it in the hands of the half-reluctant Eve. Then he reminded her of her own words, that God had forbidden them to touch it, lest they die. She would receive no more harm from eating the fruit, he declared, than from touching it. Perceiving no evil results from what she had done, Eve grew bolder. When she "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat." It was grateful to the taste, and as she ate, she seemed to feel a vivifying power, and imagined herself entering upon a higher state of existence. Without a fear she plucked and ate. And now, having herself transgressed, she became the agent of Satan in working the ruin of her husband. In a state of strange, unnatural excitement, with her hands filled with the forbidden fruit, she sought his presence, and related all that had occurred. . . .

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. Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator—all were overborne by love to Eve. She was a part of himself, and he could not endure the thought of separation. He did not realize that the same Infinite Power who had from the dust of the earth created him, a living, beautiful form, and had in love given him a companion, could supply her place. He resolved to share her fate; if she must die, he would die with her. After all, he reasoned, might not the words of the wise serpent be true? Eve was before him, as beautiful and apparently as innocent as before this act of disobedience. She expressed greater love for him than before. No sign of death appeared in her, and he decided to brave the consequences. He seized the fruit and quickly ate. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 55, 56.

The character of Satan, through his efforts to overcome and destroy the Son of God, was developing before the universe, and was being made manifest in its true malignity before the unfallen worlds that had been created by Christ. Every time he stung the heel of Christ with his murderous fang, the serpent was making more sure his own discomfiture and ruin. —"Christ's Victory Gained Through Pain and Death," *Signs of the Times*, March 26, 1894, par. 2.

Friday, April 11

For Further Reading

"God's Love for Man," in *Steps to Christ*, pp. 9–15.

"The Plan of Redemption," in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 69, 70.