

Lesson 6

Understanding Sacrifice

Sabbath Afternoon, May 3

The sacrificial service that had pointed to Christ passed away; but the eyes of men were turned to the true sacrifice for the sins of the world. The earthly priesthood ceased; but we look to Jesus, the minister of the new covenant, and "to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." "The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: . . . but Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, . . . by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Hebrews 12:24; 9:8–12.

"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25. Though the ministration was to be removed from the earthly to the heavenly temple; though the sanctuary and our great high priest would be invisible to human sight, yet the disciples were to suffer no loss thereby. They would realize no break in their communion, and no diminution of power because of the Saviour's absence. While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth. — *Christ in His Sanctuary*, p. 66.

As His mission had opened to Jesus in the temple, He shrank from contact with the multitude. He wished to return from Jerusalem in quietness, with those who knew the secret of His life. By the paschal service, God was seeking to call His people away from their worldly cares, and to remind them of His wonderful work in their deliverance from Egypt. In this work He desired them to see a promise of deliverance from sin. As the blood of the slain lamb sheltered the homes of Israel, so the blood of Christ was to save their souls; but they could be saved through Christ only as by faith they should make His life their own. There was virtue in the symbolic service only as it directed the worshipers to Christ as their personal Saviour. God desired that they should be led to prayerful study and meditation in regard to Christ's mission. — *The Desire of Ages*, p. 82.

Jesus Christ laid off His royal robe, His kingly crown, and clothed His divinity with humanity, in order to become a substitute and surety for humanity, that dying in humanity He might by His death destroy him who had the power of death. He could not have done this as God, but by coming as man Christ could die. By death He overcame death. The death of Christ bore to the death him who had the power of death, and opened the gates of the tomb for all who receive Him as their personal Saviour. — *Ellen G. White Comments*, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 462.

Sunday, May 4

Futile Sacrifices?

The Lord was not ignorant of the feelings of resentment cherished by Cain; but he would have Cain reflect upon his course, and, becoming convinced of his sin, repent, and set his feet in the path of obedience. There was no cause for his wrathful feelings toward either his brother or his God; it was his own disregard of the plainly expressed will of God that had led to the rejection of his offering. Through his angel messenger, God said to this rebellious, stubborn man: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." "If thou doest well"—not having your own way, but obeying God's commandments, coming to him with the blood of the slain victim, thus showing faith in the promised Redeemer, who, in the fullness of time, would make an atonement for guilty man, that he might not perish, but have eternal life. . . .

Thus the matter was plainly laid open before Cain; but his combativeness was aroused because his course was questioned, and he was not permitted to follow his own independent ideas. He was angry with God and angry with his brother. He was angry with God because he would not accept the plans of sinful man in place of the divine requirements, and he was angry with his brother for disagreeing with him. —"Cain and Able Tested," *Signs of the Times*, December 16, 1886, par. 8, 10.

An important lesson may be learned from the history of the offerings of Cain and Abel. The claims of infinite justice, and the demands of God's law, can be met only by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The most costly offering that man may bring to God, the fruit of his toil, his physical and intellectual acquirements, already belong to his Creator. Man has nothing which he has not received. Neither material wealth nor intellectual greatness will atone for the sin of the soul. Cain scorned the idea that it was necessary to come to God with an offering of blood. In the same spirit many in our day refuse to believe that the blood of Christ was shed as a sacrifice for the sins of men. Although Cain chose to disregard the command of God, he brought his offering with great confidence. He looked upon it as the fruit of his own labor, and hence as belonging to himself; and in presenting it to God he felt that he was placing his Creator under obligations to him. . . . The great question should be, What can I do to meet the approval of God? not, How can I best please myself?

Abel trusted wholly in the merits of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. It was this faith that connected him with God. The promise of a Redeemer was dimly understood; but the sacrificial offerings cast light upon the promise. Cain had the same opportunity of learning and accepting these truths as had Abel. God did not accept one and reject the other without sufficient reason. Abel believed and obeyed; Cain doubted and rebelled. God is no respecter of persons, yet he will reward the obedient, and punish the disobedient. —"The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels: Chapter 5—Cain and Abel," *Signs of the Times*, February 6, 1879, par. 5, 6.

Monday, May 5

The Blood of Bulls and Goats

The types and shadows of the sacrificial service, with the prophecies, gave the Israelites a veiled, indistinct view of the mercy and grace to be brought to the world by the revelation of Christ. To Moses was unfolded the significance of the types and shadows pointing to Christ. He saw to the end of that which was to be done away when, at the death of Christ, type met antitype. He saw that only through Christ can man keep the moral law. By transgression of this law man brought sin into the world, and with sin came death. Christ became the propitiation for man's sin. He proffered his perfection of character in the place of man's sinfulness. He took upon himself the curse of disobedience. The sacrifices and offerings pointed forward to the sacrifice he was to make. The slain lamb typified the Lamb that was to take away the sin of the world.

It was seeing the object of that which was to be done away, seeing Christ as revealed in the law, that illumined the face of Moses. The ministration of the law, written and engraved in stone, was a ministration of death. Without Christ, the transgressor was left under its curse, with no hope of pardon. The ministration had of itself no glory, but the promised Saviour, revealed in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law, made the moral law glorious. —“[The Righteousness of Christ in the Law,](#)” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 22, 1902, par. 6, 7.

Through the plan of salvation the justice and mercy of God are fully vindicated, and to all eternity rebellion will never again arise, affliction never again touch the universe of God.

To fallen man was revealed the plan of infinite sacrifice through which salvation was to be provided. Nothing but the death of God's dear Son could expiate man's sin, and Adam marvelled at the goodness of God in providing such a ransom for the sinner. Through the love of God, a star of hope illumined the terrible future that spreads before the transgressor. Through the institution of the typical system of sacrifice, the death of Christ was ever to be kept before guilty man, that he might better comprehend the nature of sin, the results of transgression, and the merit of the divine offering. Had there been no sin, man would never have known death. But in the innocent victim slain by his own hand, he beheld the fruits of sin,—the death of the Son of God in his behalf. He sees the immutable character of the law he has transgressed, and confessing his sin, relies upon the merits of the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

The plan of saving sinners through Christ alone was the same in the days of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and in every successive generation living before the advent of Christ, as it is in our day. Patriarchs, prophets, and martyrs from righteous Abel, looked forward to a coming Saviour, and they showed their faith in Him by sacrifices and offerings. The sacrifice of beasts shadowed forth the sinless offering of God's dear Son, and pointed forward to his death upon the cross. But at the crucifixion type met antitype, and the typical system ceased. —“[The Plan of Salvation the Same in All Ages,](#)” *The Bible Echo*, July 15, 1893, par. 5–7.

Tuesday, May 6

The Passover Lamb

Jesus is our surety. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us. Every drop of blood shed by the Jewish sacrifices pointed to the Lamb of God. All the typical offerings were fulfilled in him. Type met antitype when he died on the cross. He came to make it possible, by the sacrifice of himself, to put away sin. He paid the ransom for our redemption. We are bought with a price; and Christ calls upon us to let him take our sins, and impute to us his righteousness. —"Go, Preach the Gospel," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 19, 1898, par. 7.

Jesus was an earnest, constant worker. Never lived there among men another so weighted with responsibilities. Never another carried so heavy a burden of the world's sorrow and sin. Never another toiled with such self-consuming zeal for the good of men. Yet His was a life of health. Physically as well as spiritually He was represented by the sacrificial lamb, "without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1:19. In body as in soul He was an example of what God designed all humanity to be through obedience to His laws. —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 51.

The observance of the Passover began with the birth of the Hebrew nation. On the last night of their bondage in Egypt, when there appeared no token of deliverance, God commanded them to prepare for an immediate release. He had warned Pharaoh of the final judgment on the Egyptians, and He directed the Hebrews to gather their families within their own dwellings. Having sprinkled the doorposts with the blood of the slain lamb, they were to eat the lamb, roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. "And thus shall ye eat it," He said, "with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover." Exodus 12:11. At midnight all the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. Then the king sent to Israel the message, "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people; . . . and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said." Exodus 12:31. The Hebrews went out from Egypt an independent nation. The Lord had commanded that the Passover should be yearly kept. "It shall come to pass," He said, "when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians." Thus from generation to generation the story of this wonderful deliverance was to be repeated.

The Passover was followed by the seven days' feast of unleavened bread. On the second day of the feast, the first fruits of the year's harvest, a sheaf of barley, was presented before the Lord. All the ceremonies of the feast were types of the work of Christ. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was an object lesson of redemption, which the Passover was intended to keep in memory. The slain lamb, the unleavened bread, the sheaf of first fruits, represented the Saviour. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 76, 77.

Wednesday, May 7

Jesus at the Temple

"His name shall be called Immanuel, . . . God with us." "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God" is seen "in the face of Jesus Christ." From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was "the image of God," the image of His greatness and majesty, "the outshining of His glory." It was to manifest this glory that He came to our world. To this sin-darkened earth He came to reveal the light of God's love,—to be "God with us." Therefore it was prophesied of Him, "His name shall be called Immanuel."

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"—"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"—"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 19.

God commanded Moses for Israel, "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8), and He abode in the sanctuary, in the midst of His people. Through all their weary wandering in the desert, the symbol of His presence was with them. So Christ set up His tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment. He pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life. "The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." John 1:14, R. V., margin.

Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour's life on earth, we see "God with us." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 23, 24.

Thursday, May 8

For You Created All Things!

The world's Redeemer was equal with God. His authority was as the authority of God. He declared that He had no existence separate from the Father. The authority by which He spoke, and wrought miracles, was expressly His own, yet He assures us that He and the Father are one. . . .

As Legislator, Jesus exercised the authority of God; His commands and decisions were supported by the Sovereignty of the eternal throne. The glory of the Father was revealed in the Son; Christ made manifest the character of the Father. He was so perfectly connected with God, so completely embraced in His encircling light, that he who had seen the Son, had seen the Father. His voice was as the voice of God. —“Christ Revealed the Father,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 7, 1890, par. 1, 2.

Oh, that all could behold our precious Saviour as He is, a Saviour. Let His hand draw aside the veil which conceals His glory from our eyes. It shows Him in His high and holy place. What do we see? Our Saviour, not in a position of silence and inactivity. He is surrounded with heavenly intelligences, cherubim, and seraphim, ten thousand times ten thousand of angels.

All these heavenly beings have one object above all others, in which they are intensely interested—His church in a world of corruption. All these armies are in the service of the Prince of heaven, exalting the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. They are working for Christ under His commission, to save to the uttermost all who look to Him and believe in Him. These heavenly intelligences are speeding on their mission, doing for Christ that which Herod and Pilate did against Him. They confederate together to uphold the honor and glory of God. They are united in a holy alliance, in a grand and sublime unity of purpose, to show forth the power and compassion and love and glory of the crucified and risen Saviour.

In their service, these armies of heaven illustrate what the church of God should be. Christ is working in their behalf in the heavenly courts, sending out His messengers to all parts of the globe, to the assistance of every suffering one who looks to Him for relief, for spiritual life and knowledge.

The church of Christ on earth is amid the moral darkness of a disloyal world, which is trampling upon the law of Jehovah. But their Redeemer, who has purchased their ransom with the price of His own precious blood, has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Emmanuel. The bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, shining through His church, will gather into His fold every lost, straying sheep, who will come unto Him and find refuge in Him. They will find peace and light and joy in Him who is peace and righteousness for ever. —Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 967, 968.

Friday, May 9

For Further Reading

"The Passover," in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 273–279;

"He That Hath Seen Me Hath Seen the Father," *Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1890, par. 1–13.