

Glimpses of Our God **God as Redeemer**

Lesson #3 for January 21, 2012

Scriptures: Romans 1:18; Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20; 1 Peter 1:19; Mark 10:32-45; Matt. 27:46.

1. This lesson will focus on the core issues in the plan of salvation. *Salvation* means healing. They require our careful attention and thorough investigation. The range of ideas is enormous.
2. "Sin is so bad, so hostile to the created world, that only the Creator Himself could solve the problem." (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Sabbath, January 14)
3. Why is sin so bad? Sin separates us from our God. (Isaiah 59:2; 1 John 3:4) Faith is the way back. Faith is the way to reconciliation. (Romans 14:23) What does a redeemer do? Is he the one who pays the ransom? Has God paid our ransom? Why is God the only One who could do that? Is He the only One who can bargain with Satan? What price did He pay? How did He pay it? See https://www.theox.org/images/images_A2115/LUKEtg-Fin-21.pdf - Question #12 (On Theox.org website, Teacher's Guide, Luke, Question #12). How is this related to the great controversy?
4. Read Ephesians 2:13, *NKJV*: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."
5. How does the "blood of Christ" bring us back to God? *Blood* is a codeword for His death. His death accomplished many things that affect us. Some would say that He paid the price for our sins. But, there is much more to it than that. God paid an enormous price to win the great controversy. With the help of Ellen White, Seventh-day Adventists have been given a broader, deeper, larger view of the plan of salvation which includes not only our salvation—as important as that is—but takes into account the great controversy over God's character and government which is an issue in the entire universe. Sin began in heaven next to the throne of God when Lucifer, God's foremost angel, became jealous of Christ and began doubting the trustworthiness of God. He began to suggest those doubts to the angels until at least one-third of them joined him in rebelling against God. (Revelation 12) Satan must have used some very persuasive arguments in order to convince angels who were living in the very presence of God! So, those questions and arguments had to be answered, and they were.

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. [Is there anything more important than our salvation?] It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto [69] Me." John 12:31,32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. *Patriarchs and Prophets* 68.2

6. Does God's wrath need to be assuaged? Do Hosea 11:7,8 and Romans 1:18,24,26,28 help us understand God's wrath? Was God angry at Christ? What does it mean to bear God's wrath? What would happen to us if we had to bear God's wrath? Has anyone ever been "handed over" or "delivered over" by God to suffer the consequences of sin? (Romans 4:25; Matthew 23:37; 27:46) **"God's wrath is best described as His turning away in loving disappointment from those who don't want Him anyway, thus leaving them to the inevitable and awful consequences of their own rebellious choices."** (Graham Maxwell) See Hosea - A Teacher's Guide - https://www.theox.org/images/images_A2115/HOSEAtg.pdf - Question #13.
7. Another word for redemption or salvation is *atonement* which really means at-one-ment. Atonement

signifies a reconciliation between God and sinners. “The atonement is so deep, so heavy, so profound, that we grasp only what we can. Beyond that, thinking stops, and all we can do is worship.” (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for January 14)

8. If the atonement is the most profound thing that has ever happened on this earth, why would thinking about it ever stop on this earth or in heaven? God wants us to be His friends! If something is important and we do not understand it yet, is it best to just sit back in awe—which we will do as we understand it more deeply—or would it be better to keep studying it to learn more?
9. At the cross, in the most humiliating, inconceivable manner imaginable, God triumphs over and shames the enemy. Love, justice, and compassion fuse in a singular dynamic act. God forgives sinners by paying in Himself the price of sin and absorbing into His own suffering Self the penalty of that sin. On Calvary, God reveals how extremely costly forgiveness is. (*Ibid*, for January 15)
10. God is not just triumphing over or shaming the enemy. He is demonstrating to us the terrible consequences of sin which He had warned us about back in Genesis 2:17. Did God intend for us to know that sin is deadly? What does it mean for God to pay “in Himself the price of sin”? What is the price of sin? What does it mean to say, God was “absorbing into His own suffering Self the penalty of that sin”? If God has paid the price of sin, does that mean that all sinners will be saved? Or, do we need more than forgiveness to be saved? Romans 6:23, *GNB* says, “For sin pays its wage—death.” If that is the natural consequence of being a sinner, how can the death of Someone else—Jesus—be the payment for my sin? “Sin is lawlessness” or “rebellion.” (1 John 3:4, *RSV*) How does the death of Jesus “deal with” or “do away with” (Romans 8:3) my rebellion? If this is a legal or forensic payment for a debt incurred, who is demanding that payment?
11. God doesn’t love us because Christ died for us; Christ died for us because God loved us. The atonement of Christ was not offered to persuade the Father to love those whom He otherwise hated. The death of Christ did not bring forth a love that was not already in existence. Rather, it was a manifestation of the love that was eternally in God’s heart. Jesus never had to persuade the Father to love us. Notice how He insists on this truth in John 3:16,17; 16:26,27. (*Ibid*)
12. If Jesus does not have to persuade the Father to love us, does that eliminate intercession and mediation? Or, does He still have to pay the price for our sins? Is that mediation?
13. “And because sin doesn’t anger us anymore, perhaps it becomes harder to realize that sin arouses the wrath of a Holy God.” (*Ibid*) How does that related to our definition of wrath as used in the Bible?
14. Is sin serious because it arouses the wrath of God? Or, because it is deadly? (Genesis 2:17) **Should we be afraid of God? Or, should we be afraid of sin?**
15. “Paul is not afraid to discuss the wrath of God. How does he express it in Romans 1:18?” (*Ibid*)
16. And what is the result of God’s wrath? Read Romans 1:24,26,28. God finally has to “hand us over” or “deliver us over” to the consequences of what we have chosen for ourselves. And the results are nothing short of disaster. But, how does that relate to God’s wrath or anger?
17. “How seriously do you take the sin in your life? And what criteria do you use to justify your answer?” (*Ibid*) Do we really believe that sin is deadly? Do we act like that is true? Down through the centuries, religion has so distorted reality that we have tended to fear God and be comfortable with sin since we are surrounded by sin every day. God’s plan was for us to love Him and fear sin! Religion has turned God’s plan upside down.
18. Read Genesis 3:15. Does this sound like God is going to win the great controversy by the use of force? If God plans to use force to conquer the Devil, why didn’t He do that back in the beginning and avoid this whole mess? How does God “bruise” or “crush” Satan’s head? God defeats His enemy not by forcibly crushing him but by proving that he was, and is, a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:43,44) So, how do you deal with a liar? From the beginning, the major issue in the great controversy has been the question: Who is telling us the truth?—God or Satan. (Genesis 2:17; 3:1-

- 4) In essence, by continuing to sin every day, sinners are saying that Satan was/is right. How can we learn to take sin more seriously? Do we really believe that God has told us the truth about sin?
19. Read Genesis 22. God told Abraham to sacrifice his son on a distant hill. In that case, it sounds like God was the one who demanded the sacrifice.
20. . . . Centuries later—another Father would offer His Son. This time, however, there would be no animal to die instead of the son. The Son Himself would die on the altar. The Father would truly give up His Son, and the Son would give His life. (*Ibid*, for January 16)
21. So, who was demanding the death of Jesus? Was it to appease the wrath of God? Would that be the Father? If the Father really loves us, would He have been willing to come and die in place of the Son?

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, humbling Himself, veiling His glory, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed. . . . In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. (*That I May Know Him* 338.4)

22. So, whose wrath needs to be appeased?
23. After the death of Jesus, on the road to Emmaus, Jesus taught the two disheartened disciples about the atonement from “Moses and all the prophets.” (Luke 24:27) Why did Jesus “maintain His disguise” until He had explained those important points from the Old Testament? Why didn’t He just announce who He was and ask them for their questions and give them the answers?

He maintained his disguise till he had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in his life, his character, his mission to earth, and his death and resurrection. **He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not because it was supported by his personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of his life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth.** When the object of his labors with the two disciples was gained, he revealed himself to them that their joy might be full, and then vanished from their sight. {3SP 214.2}

Jesus wanted them to have an intelligent knowledge of the relationship between the Old Testament prophecies and the New Testament fulfillment.

24. Read Isaiah 53:1-6. What is being suggested by Isaiah 53:4, *GNB*? “But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne. All the while ***we thought*** that his suffering was punishment sent by God.” Is that the death of sinners? Do we suggest that?
25. Do we ever suggest that God was pouring out His wrath on His Son as a punishment for sin? Is that the same as “paying the penalty or price for our sin”? Is that the second death?
26. Read 1 Peter 1:19; 2:21-25. Notice especially 1 Peter 2:24, *GNB*: “Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. It is by his wounds that you have been healed.” We are supposed to be healed by this experience rather than being just legally forgiven. What does that imply? Has your understanding of the death of Christ “healed” you? In what way? How do we die to sin? Have we taken seriously what Christ demonstrated on the cross: that sin is deadly?
27. Scan through the four Gospels. One-third to one-half of each of the Gospels focuses on the final week of Christ’s life. Just before that final week as Jesus was walking with a large crowd from Jericho up to Jerusalem for His final journey on this earth, something remarkable happened. Read Mark 10:32-41; Luke 18:31-34. Jesus predicted that He would be “handed over.”
28. This was at least the third time that Jesus had spoken pointedly about His death. But, the disciples had been so influenced by the political hopes of their nation that they could not even comprehend

what Jesus was saying to them! (Luke 18:34)

29. It should be clear that the single most important event in the history of our world was the death of Christ in Gethsemane and on Calvary.
30. We must avoid the temptation to reduce Jesus' death on the cross to merely an "example of selfless love." It was certainly that, but considering our situation as sinners, it would take more than "an example of selfless love" to redeem us. It would take, instead, our God bearing in Himself the full brunt of His own wrath against sin." (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for January 19)
31. We have already pointed out Ellen White's words that the plan of salvation had a broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. So, what is that broader and deeper purpose? The questions and accusations made by Satan against God had to be dealt with. The entire universe had to learn who was telling the truth—God or Satan. If God cannot be trusted, who would even want to live with Him forever? See *The Plan of Salvation in the Setting of the Great Controversy* at <https://www.theox.org/index.cfm/pageid/756/index.html> (Resources on Theox.org website).
32. "It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 752,753. And what was Christ crying as He suffered the full effects of God's wrath upon Him? He cried: "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?" (Matthew 27:46, *GNB*) What does that tell us about God's wrath? Review Romans 1:18,24,26,28. Compare Romans 4:25.
33. A careful study of these verses will make it clear that when God's wrath is poured out and He hands sinners over—as represented by the death of Christ—what God does is "let us go" to reap the natural consequences of our own rebellious choices.
34. "Why is God's love for sinners one of the main reasons why He is wrathful against sin?" (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for January 20)
35. God understands much more clearly than we ever can the deadly results of sin. How would you feel if something or someone was killing your children? Should we be surprised at God's reaction against sin?
36. Ellen White said we should spend a thoughtful hour every day contemplating the life of Christ, especially the closing scenes. (*DA* 83.4) Why is that? Satan has been incredibly successful at suggesting that God is arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe in His judgments. These are all words used by Ellen White to describe Satan's charges against God. In the setting of the great controversy, do we understand clearly why Jesus had to die?
37. Left to ourselves, we would be destroyed by sin. Our need for redemption from it caused the painful and lonely death of God's Son. . . The wrath of God is a difficult concept for many. If we could, many of us would banish it to the outer edges of the Old Testament. And yet, here it is near the beginning of a book (Romans) that most people associate with the love and grace of God. So, what is the wrath of God? Against what or whom is it directed? Is it really what we think of as wrath or anger, or is it just a way of referring to the natural consequences of sin? (*Adult Teacher's Bible Study Guide*, p. 37)
38. God desperately wants to separate us from our sin. How can He do that without violating our freedom? Does He need to convince us of the seriousness of sin? By Jesus death on the cross, He has shown us what happens if we refuse to separate from our sins!
39. In the Old Testament, we observe that the children of Israel loved to claim the privileges of being God's chosen people. But, they almost universally shied away from the responsibilities. In a similar manner, do Christians rejoice in the redemption God offers and shy away from the sorrow for sin?

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