

Rebellion and Redemption

Global Rebellion and the Patriarchs

Lesson #3 for January 16, 2016

Scriptures: Genesis 3:9-10; 4:1-15; 6:1-13; 22:1-19; 28:12-15; Psalm 51:1.

1. This lesson will cover briefly the stories of Adam through Joseph—the patriarchs in the book of Genesis. In this series of lessons, we need to remember that we are talking about the great controversy over God's character and His form of government.
2. As we study the great controversy, it will be very important for us to think not only about God's role in each of these stories but also Satan's role? What did the creatures who surround God's throne in heaven think about what God was doing? (Revelation 4:4-8) What did the beings in the rest of universe think as they watched Eve and then Adam distrust God, eat that fruit, etc.? (See Job 1:6.) What did they think about what Satan was doing?
3. Read Genesis 4:1-15. Was that the first lamb to be offered? What was the role of worship in this story? Was worship involved in the story of Noah? Abraham? Jacob? Joseph?
4. Think about how **Adam and Eve** felt at the birth of their first son, Cain. Read Genesis 4:1. Eve fully believed that son was going to be the promised Redeemer. Try to imagine the experience of Adam and Eve as their first two sons, Cain and Abel, grew up. Where were Adam and Eve when Cain and Abel offered the sacrifices mentioned in Genesis 4? How many times do you think those two sons of Adam and Eve had observed their parents offering young lambs as sacrifices? Did that happen frequently?
5. How do you think the onlooking universe responded to Adam and Eve's first sin as recorded in Genesis 3:1-10. What did they think as they watched Adam and Eve trying to hide from God?
6. Try to imagine what it would have been like to live on this earth when there were only three or four or perhaps a small handful of people alive at the same time. Almost the entire force of Satan and his angels could have had you on which to focus their evil intentions. What do you think God's angels were doing at that time? Remember that in those days of Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel, Satan—although he had deceived one-third of the sinless angels—and his angels were really relative amateurs at causing evil. Imagine how much more skilled they are now!
7. Read Genesis 4:9. How would you compare Cain's response to God after killing Abel with Adam and Eve's response to God after their sin? Adam hid because he felt he was naked. He was embarrassed, guilty; he felt shame and fear. Cain did not even seem to care about his brother. Instead, Cain was angry, cynical, rebellious, and defiant.
8. Try to imagine Adam and Eve burying Abel. Did God instruct them on what to do with the dead body? Did Cain help dig?
9. Fortunately for Adam and Eve, another son was born. His name was Seth. He seemed to be a wonderful replacement for Abel.
10. How do you explain the almost total deterioration of the human race before the flood? Why does it seem like we are just born sinners? Is it really true that left to ourselves we would all self-destruct? (James 1:13-15) What does that tell us about the very nature of sin?
11. Read Genesis 5:21-24 and Genesis 6:9-10. What does it mean to *walk with God*? They

spent a lot of time with God.

12. When we read in Genesis 6 that “God could bear it no longer,” is the Bible suggesting that God lost control of His emotions? Not at all! The Bible writers were using human language to describe God. God sent the flood because He was about to completely lose contact with the human race. Apparently, only **Noah** was paying any attention to God.
13. Try to imagine what the creatures standing around God’s throne thought as they watched God destroy this earth in a flood. In effect, wasn’t He destroying almost everything that He had created? Just before the flood, don’t you think that Satan felt that he was on the verge of winning the great controversy here on this earth? Did he accuse God of being unfair? What did Satan say to the onlooking universe about the flood? Didn’t he accuse God?
14. Read Genesis 6:1-13. We see a partial reversal of the special acts of creation: 1) Waters suddenly came from above and below; 2) The sea and the dry land once again merged; 3) The fish of the sea and the birds of the air were brought together; and 4) The earth was brought back almost to a condition of being “formless and empty.” (Genesis 1:2, *NIV*)
15. What do you think you would have done if you had been God in the days of Noah? God decided it was necessary to send a flood in order to preserve the one contact He seemed to have on this earth. How many times has God had to start over?
16. Genesis goes into considerable detail, discussing the life and experiences of Abram who later became **Abraham**. Abraham was called from his home in Ur/Haran in order to separate him from his idolatrous relatives. (See Joshua 24:2.) Is it easier to remain faithful to God if you are living among strangers? Or, if you are living with family members who are idolaters? Things had apparently become almost as bad as in the days of Noah. Abraham was 75 years old and had no children. When God called him from Haran, He promised him a son. That promise was repeated twice later as recorded in Genesis 13:16 and 17:19.
17. As Abraham spent time in Haran and later in Canaan, he convinced a large number of people to join his entourage and become faithful servants of God.

God called Abraham to be a teacher of His word, He chose him to be the father of a great nation, because He saw that Abraham would instruct his children and his household in the principles of God’s law. [Genesis 26:5] And that which gave power to Abraham’s teaching was the influence of his own life. **His great household consisted of more than a thousand souls, many of them heads of families, and not a few but newly converted from heathenism.** Such a household required a firm hand at the helm. No weak, vacillating methods would suffice. Of Abraham God said, “I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him.” Genesis 18:19. Yet his authority was exercised with such wisdom and tenderness that hearts were won. The testimony of the divine Watcher is, “They shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.” Genesis 18:19. And Abraham’s influence extended beyond his own household. Wherever he pitched his tent, he set up beside it the altar for sacrifice and worship. When the tent was removed, the altar remained; and **many a roving Canaanite, whose knowledge of God had been gained from the life of Abraham His servant, tarried at that altar to offer sacrifice to Jehovah.**—Ellen G. White, *Education* 187.2. [Content in brackets and bold type are added.]

18. Read Genesis 22:1-19. We know that Abraham had a number of stumblings and foibles in his life. Twice, he lied about his wife being his sister. (Genesis 12:10-20; 20:4-5) He took Hagar as a secondary wife in order to have the son that God had promised but did not come. (Genesis 16) So, God saw that it was necessary to put him through that final test at the age of 120. What was the purpose of all that? Does God test us like that in any way?

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. The agony which he endured during the dark days of that fearful trial was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man's redemption. 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? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32.

The sacrifice required of Abraham was not alone for his own good, nor solely for the benefit of succeeding generations; but it was also for the instruction of the sinless intelligences of heaven and of other worlds. The field of the controversy between Christ and Satan—the field on which the plan of redemption is wrought out—is the lesson book of the universe. Because Abraham had shown a lack of faith in God's promises, Satan had accused him before the angels and before God of having failed to comply with the conditions of the covenant, and as unworthy of its blessings. God desired to prove the loyalty of His servant before all heaven, to demonstrate that nothing less than perfect obedience can be accepted, and to open more fully before them the plan of salvation.

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 unflinching 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.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 154.2-155.2. [Bold type is added. However, brackets and the content in brackets are present in the original.]

19. Did Abraham ever understand why God asked him to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah?

Abraham had greatly desired to see the promised Saviour. He offered up the most earnest prayer that before his death he might behold the Messiah. And he saw Christ. A supernatural light was given him, and he acknowledged Christ’s divine character. He saw His day, and was glad. [John 8:56] He was given a view of the divine sacrifice for sin. Of this sacrifice he had an illustration in his own experience. The command came to him, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him . . . for a burnt offering.” Genesis 22:2. [469] Upon the altar of sacrifice he laid the son of promise, the son in whom his hopes were centered. Then as he waited beside the altar with knife upraised to obey God, he heard a voice from heaven saying, “Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me.” Genesis 22:12. This terrible ordeal was imposed upon Abraham that he might see the day of Christ, and realize the great love of God for the world, so great that to raise it from its degradation, He gave His only-begotten Son to a most shameful death.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* 468.4-469.0.

Genesis 12:2-3: (John 8:56; Galatians 3:8). **Abraham Saw Coming Redeemer**—Christ said to them “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56). **How did Abraham know of the coming of the Redeemer? God gave him light in regard to the future. He looked forward to the time when the Saviour should come to this earth, His divinity veiled by humanity. By faith he saw the world’s Redeemer coming as God in the flesh. He saw the weight of guilt lifted from the human race, and borne by the divine substitute (Manuscript 33, 1911).** *1SDABC* 1092.4. [Content in brackets is added. Bold type is added except the bold type of “Abraham Saw Coming Redeemer” which is bold in the original.]

20. We know that Abraham prayed night and day for three days on his way to Mount Moriah. He came to trust in God’s promise although he did not know how it would work out. He was certain that God would either spare Isaac’s life or, if necessary, raise him from the dead. (See Hebrews 11:19.) How would you describe Abraham’s faith at that point in time? How certain was he about God’s former promises? Do we need faith like that?
21. The story of **Jacob and Esau** is a sad one. Jacob wanted to do his best to serve God. Esau seemed to live only for himself. At the urging of his mother, Jacob managed to deceive his blind father, Isaac, and took the birthright which apparently should have been given to his older, twin brother. As a result, Esau was determined to kill Jacob after what—as he imagined—would be the imminent death of his father. Jacob was forced to flee, and his

mother recommended he go to Laban's house in Haran, her homeland.

22. Fleeing through the desert, Jacob was forced to sleep on the ground with a stone as his pillow. Then, he received that vision from God, giving him the same promise that had been given to Abraham and Isaac before him. The entire land was to be given to his descendants. God promised to continue to be with Jacob.
23. Twenty years later, then, a wealthy man—with two wives, two concubines, and many children—Jacob decided to escape from Laban and his dangerous sons and return to Canaan. Abraham was told to leave his relatives. Was it a good idea for Jacob to return to his relatives when he fled from his brother?
24. What do you think Satan's role was in the Jacob story? In deceiving Isaac? In the flight to Laban in Haran? And ending up with four wives? And Jacob's flight back to Canaan? What about the dual at the Jabbok? What about the approach of Esau? God had to intervene by giving visions to both Laban and Esau to prevent them from harming Jacob.
25. Read the initial story of **Joseph** as recorded in Genesis 37. How much was Satan involved in the animosity that developed in that family? How did God turn things around? Did the onlooking universe learn anything from the Joseph story? Who do you think sent those dreams to Joseph? Could Satan have sent them? Was Joseph a spoiled brat? Even after receiving those dreams, was it really necessary for Joseph to tell his family about them? Was that part of God's plan? Or, was it Satan's plan? What purpose did it serve?
26. Of course, we know that Joseph ended up in Egypt as a slave; but, soon, he rose to a position of importance only to find himself unfairly accused by Potipher's wife and thrown into prison. After years there, he succeeded in interpreting the dreams of the butler and the baker and then, Pharaoh himself to become the prime minister of Egypt.
27. Think of the unfairness of Jacob's attitude toward Joseph. Then, think of what happened to Joseph in Dothan. Suddenly, the privileged and favored son was on his way to being a slave. Notice these words about that experience from Ellen White.

Meanwhile, Joseph with his captors was on the way to Egypt. As the caravan journeyed southward toward the borders of Canaan, the boy could discern in the distance the hills among which lay his father's tents. Bitterly he wept at thought of that loving father in his loneliness and affliction. Again the scene at Dothan came up before him. He saw his angry brothers and felt their fierce glances bent upon him. The stinging, insulting words that had met his agonized entreaties were ringing in his ears. With a trembling heart he looked forward to the future. What a change in situation—from the tenderly cherished son to the despised and helpless slave! Alone and friendless, what would be his lot in the strange land to which he was going? For a time Joseph gave himself up to uncontrolled grief and terror.

But, in the providence of God, even this experience was to be a blessing to him. He had learned in a few hours that which years might not otherwise have taught him. His father, strong and tender as his love had been, had done him wrong by his partiality and indulgence. This unwise preference had angered his brothers and provoked them to the cruel deed that had separated him from his home. Its effects were manifest also in his own character. Faults had been encouraged that were now to be corrected. He was becoming self-sufficient and exacting. Accustomed to the tenderness of his father's care, he felt that he was unprepared to cope with the difficulties before

him, in the bitter, uncared-for life of a stranger and a slave.

Then his thoughts turned to his father's God. In his childhood he had been taught to love and fear Him. Often in his father's tent he had listened to the story of the vision that Jacob saw as he fled from his home an exile and a fugitive. He had been told of the Lord's promises to Jacob, and how they had been fulfilled—how, in the hour of need, the angels of God had come [214] to instruct, comfort, and protect him. And he had learned of the love of God in providing for men a Redeemer. Now all these precious lessons came vividly before him. Joseph believed that the God of his fathers would be his God. He then and there gave himself fully to the Lord, and he prayed that the Keeper of Israel would be with him in the land of his exile.

His soul thrilled with the high resolve to prove himself true to God—under all circumstances to act as became a subject of the King of heaven. He would serve the Lord with undivided heart; he would meet the trials of his lot with fortitude and perform every duty with fidelity. One day's experience had been the turning point in Joseph's life. Its terrible calamity had transformed him from a petted child to a man, thoughtful, courageous, and self-possessed.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 213.1-214.1. [Bold type is added.]

28. Read Genesis 45:1-11. Try to place yourself in the position of one of those brothers as Joseph said, "I am Joseph."
29. Remember that Joseph had been talking to them through a interpreter. He had not gotten close to them. He was dressed as an Egyptian of royal birth.
30. How many of us when being treated unfairly by friends or even family members or employers respond as Joseph did? Have you had an experience something like what Joseph had and made it an opportunity for Christian growth? If you had been Joseph, do you think you could have forgiven your brothers?
31. Review once again the sudden reversals that happened to Adam and Eve when they discovered that Abel had been killed by Cain. Did Zipporah have any idea what was going to happen to her when she married Moses? When Leah was a young girl, could she have imagined what her life would actually end up being like?
32. And what about Jesus? Do you think His family—especially Mary and Joseph—had any idea what was going to happen to Him as they watched that beautiful Baby grow up in their arms? Was there anything fair about the way Jesus was treated after He began His ministry?
33. We often jokingly talk about sibling rivalry. How many stories in the Bible can you think of where sibling rivalry was a factor? How did the brothers of Jesus treat Him? How did His sisters treat Him? (See Matthew 13:56; Mark 6:3.)
34. What is the difference between faith and certainty? How certain could we be about something, based on our faith—our relationship with God? Read Jeremiah 17:9. It was clear to Jeremiah that the human heart was desperately wicked. How would you describe the condition of the hearts of those who opposed God's people in our stories for this week? Do you see God at work in the great controversy in your own life or the lives of those around you? Do you see Satan at work in our world? How much worse could things become?

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