

LESSONS

from the

BOOK OF LIFE

January - March, 2019

From Eden to Eternity - Part 1

*“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my
mouth; it shall not return unto me void,
but it shall accomplish that which I shall prosper
in the thing whereto I sent it”*

Isaiah 55:11



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EDITORS' NOTE

Greetings Sabbath School,

Welcome to the first of a two-part series of Lessons entitled 'From Eden to Eternity'. The topics presented in the series, are geared towards helping us to understand how God worked through the ages to preserve His initial plan for mankind – to live in fellowship and harmony with Him and with each other.

Part 1 pulls on the experiences of mankind with his Creator from creation to the point where the laws were given to him. Part 2 will feature those individuals, events and happenings involved in or surrounding the appeasement of sin to the establishment of God's Kingdom here on earth.

It is hoped that as we study, we will be motivated to align ourselves to be part of this great family of God.

Happy Studying

LESSON 1

ADAM: THE FIRST MAN AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

For study participants to understand God's purpose for creating mankind.

SCRIPTURES: Genesis 1:26 - Chapter 2 **KEY VERSES:** Isaiah 43:6-7

INTRODUCTION

The earth was without form and void. God in His wisdom spoke the word and things came into being. Throughout the process of creating light, land, water, plants, animals and mankind, all for varying purposes, God stopped at intervals, observed his handiwork and saw that it was good.

THE LESSON

'Let us make man in our own image', was the statement God made after He had created the earth and the things therein. One might wonder why, after God created all the elements of the earth, was there a need to create man? Genesis 1:27 says that man was created in the image of God, and for His glory (Isaiah 43:7). Man was designed with the inherent ability to 'know' God, to relate to and enjoy fellowship with Him. Man - Adam was created and placed in a perfect home, the Garden of Eden. Adam had God all to himself there was no other human being competing with him for closeness with his Creator. To make life more beautiful, God created a woman - Eve - to be the wife of Adam.

Fellowship was something God obviously desired from the beginning. He did not just create subjects over which to rule. Unfortunately, Adam, became distracted. By choosing to disobey his Creator, physical and spiritual separation was created between man and God. God, however, desiring to re-establish this relationship with mankind, made a prophetic announcement in Genesis 3:15, of the promise of a Saviour of mankind - Jesus Christ.

ACTIVITY

List some strategies that could be used by believers to maintain their relationship with God.

LESSON 2

THE FALL OF MAN

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

For study participants to:

- i. examine the consequences of man's disobedience;
- ii. appreciate the sacrifice God made for the redemption of mankind

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 3 | **KEY VERSE:** Romans 5:12

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the fall, God and man walked together in the garden (Gen.3:8). Adam, and his wife Eve, would from time to time enjoy the Garden of Paradise created by a loving God. They were at liberty to partake of everything God had designed for them. However, by losing focus of their purpose on earth (that of obeying God), man was lured away by the cunning strategy of Satan.

THE LESSON

The account in Genesis 3, tells us of the craftiness of Satan in convincing man (through the woman) that God's instructions were in an effort to "hide the truth" (v5). Instead of believing God, Eve believed Satan, and thus began the fall of mankind. Adam and Eve gained a knowledge of good and evil, one which they would regret. Gone was the innocence they had once enjoyed. Their nakedness, which once caused them no shame (Genesis 2:25), now made them ashamed to stand before God. The daily encounter with God to which they were once accustomed, they now sought to avoid. Ultimately, they were banned from paradise - the Garden (3:22-24).

The complete restoration of a personal relationship between God and man is at the heart of salvation. By God's grace, through faith in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, peace and fellowship with God can be fully restored and the gift of eternal life can be obtained by mankind (Consider John 3:16). The spiritual union between God and man, would therefore be restored and the creature would once again have the opportunity to enjoy intimate fellowship with his Creator.

ACTIVITIES

1. List some consequences man suffered having disobeyed God.
2. In light of the Lesson, discuss how God facilitated the restoration of mankind.

LESSON 3

SETH : FATHER OF THE GODLY TRIBE

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

For those who study to realize that God always has a way of bringing His plans to fruition.

SCRIPTURES: Genesis 4:25 - 26 & 5:3-8 | **KEY VERSE:** Romans 11:33

INTRODUCTION

In less than 300 years (shortly after they were created), mankind's sinful decline escalated to the extent that God was not being honoured as He should. However, with the birth of Enos (Seth's son), mankind began once more to honour God (Genesis 4:26).

THE LESSON

An understanding of how God works in the best of or in the worst of times, brings to the fore the words of the poet in the song, 'God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.' What more could have happened, Adam had fallen from grace and Cain had killed his brother Abel. Events just after Abel was killed, took a 'nose dive' as the descendants of Cain took to doing the wrong. Lamech, a descendant of Cain is recorded as the first man to marry two wives and the man to have committed the second murder (Gen. 4:19, 23-24). God, however, caused Adam and Eve to bear another son whose name was Seth - the only other son mentioned by name, although they had other children (Gen. 5:4). The focus was now on Seth, the third son, who according to Eve, was given as a replacement for Abel.

It would seem as though most people were just doing as they pleased and hardly anyone took time or made effort to call them back to the worship of God. Miraculously though, following the birth of Enos, men began calling once more upon God (Gen. 4:26). Josephus (1998) one of the most quoted Jewish Historians in speaking of Seth said, "Seth when he was brought up, and came to those years in which he could discern what was good, became a virtuous man; and as he was himself of an excellent character, so did he leave children who imitated his

virtues.” Thus, it seemed Seth was a good replacement for Abel whose sacrifice was accepted by God (Gen.4:4).

God, after ‘man’s fall,’ said that One born of a woman would hurt the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15). History has proved that such a one could only come through a people who honoured God. A study of the behaviour of the descendants of Cain showed that they did not regard God. However, Seth’s descendants, called the Godly tribe, led a back-to-God revival. This could possibly be the reason Seth was recorded in the genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38, emphasis on verse 38).

ACTIVITY

Compare the lifestyle of Cain and his descendants with Seth’s descendants as is recorded in Gen 4:17-26.

LESSON 4

NOAH: THE ONE FOUND WORTHY

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For participants to:

- i. understand that God is never short of a man
- ii. be aware that the Lord is always interested in man's salvation

SCRIPTURES: Genesis 6:5-22 & 7:1-24 | **KEY VERSE:** Genesis 7:1

INTRODUCTION

Since man's original sin in the Garden of Eden, he has been on a downward spiral. The initial sin of disobedience, influenced by covetousness, was followed by lying, then murder until man's sins were at the point where even the imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was evil continually (Gen. 6:5).

THE LESSON

How disappointing it must have been that after creating a perfect world, evil and wickedness had spread to the extent that God could only find one man - Noah who was just and perfect (Gen.6:8-9). The Holy and Righteous God could not have communion with mankind because of their sinful ways. As a result, He purposed to destroy man by a flood (6:6-7). However, because Noah found grace in His sight, He decided against total annihilation of the human race (6:8;11-13 & 17-22).

So the rains descended and the floods came but Noah, his family and selected animals were safe in the ark, where they remained until the water was dried up. Having cleansed the earth, God sought to re-establish, through Noah, a close, long-term relationship with mankind. In doing so, He not only promised that He would never again destroy man in that manner (Genesis 8:21-22 & 9:11-17) but also gave instructions that would guide mankind in clean living, as well as to ensure the continuity of the human race (9:3-7).

As we reflect on Noah's account we are able to appreciate that it is not God's wish for man to perish but that we should seek repentance and 'live' (2 Peter 3:9).

LESSON 5

LIFE AFTER THE FLOOD

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 8:15-22 | **KEY VERSE:** Genesis 9:11

INTRODUCTION

After spending several months in the safety of the Ark while the earth was being destroyed by the Flood, Noah and his family were finally able to leave the Ark when the waters abated. The world they encountered on disembarking was very different from the one to which they were accustomed before they went into the Ark. All other persons were dead; so too were all the creatures which were on the face of the Earth. This was a new beginning for mankind and the Bible outlines some things which set the stage for this postdiluvian¹ world.

THE LESSON

Replenishment of Life on Earth

God instructed Noah to take all the creatures out of the ark with him so that they could reproduce and increase their numbers (Gen. 8:17). The Earth also needed to be repopulated with mankind as there were only eight persons alive. God therefore told Noah and his sons in Genesis 9:1 to multiply and replenish the Earth. This was in keeping with the original instruction given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 9:19 tells us that it was through the three sons of Noah that the world was repopulated.

Expanded Diet, With Restrictions

When God created mankind, He told them to use the vegetation for food (Gen. 1:29). After the Flood, He expanded this diet to include living creatures (Gen. 9:3). It is clear that God intended that only certain creatures deemed ‘clean’ be eaten as in Genesis 7:2 He told Noah to take a greater number of those into the Ark. Another restriction in this diet, which now included the eating of animals, was that blood should not be eaten (Gen. 9:4).

The Rainbow Covenant

In Genesis 9:8-17, God made a covenant with mankind and all other creatures that He would never again destroy all creatures by a flood. As a constant reminder

1 Of or relating to the period after the Flood

of this promise, He set the rainbow in the sky. It is to be noted, though, that God still reserves to Himself the option to destroy the entire world by means other than a flood.

With this fresh start, man had the perfect opportunity to live righteously and avoid sin which had led to God's punishment through the Flood. As the record tells, though, in Genesis 9:20-27, this was not the case. Ham erred greatly in his treatment of his drunk and unclothed father, Noah. This resulted in Noah cursing him but commending his brothers Shem and Japheth who acted to restore their father's dignity.

The blessing Noah pronounced on Shem is of major significance as it was to be through him that Jesus would come (Luke 3:36). So even as man returned to his sinful ways after the Flood, God was working on His plan for man's full redemption through Jesus, the Saviour of the World.

LESSON 6

THE CALL OF ABRAM/ABRAHAM

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

For participants to understand that:

- i. God will call whomsoever He will;
- ii. God does not call the qualified but qualifies the called

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 12: 1-5 | **KEY VERSES:** Hebrews 11:8-9

INTRODUCTION

God called Abraham who lived in a city in Babylon – Ur of the Chaldees – a sinful city where idolatry was widespread. His father Terah worshipped and made idols. He was not raised in the best environment, yet, according to the key verse, Abraham by faith believed God and obeyed His instructions. God's call and unconditional promise to Abraham, can be seen as Him setting the stage to preserve His initial plan for mankind.

THE LESSON

Abraham was commanded by God to separate himself from his countrymen who were undoubtedly idolaters. He obeyed God's call and believed the promise that God made to him: a call to salvation and service which would ultimately lead to eternal life as supported by Matt 7:21. Because of his trust in and obedience to God, a new course was charted for Abraham's life. Likewise, when we accept Jesus Christ we are set on the path to eternal life.

By examining the promise made to Abraham, God can be seen working through the ages to preserve mankind. This promise includes:

Inheritance

- *I will make of thee a great nation*
- *I will bless thee*

Status/Influence

- *I will make thy name great*
- *Thou wilt be a blessing*

Protection/Assurance

- *I will bless them that bless thee*
- *I will curse him that curse thee*
- *And in thee will all families of the earth be blessed*

The people of God should be eternally grateful that Abraham was obedient, as through him, Jesus was born, and we are now heirs according to the promise made to Abraham.

ACTIVITIES

1. In light of the Lesson, discuss:
 - Galatians 3:8-9
 - Galatians 3:29
2. How does the promise made to Abraham apply to us today?

LESSON 7

ISAAC: THE PROMISED CHILD

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 15:1-6 | **KEY VERSE:** Genesis 22:18

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages, God uses particular individuals through whom His purposes would be revealed. Isaac one of Abraham's eight sons (Gen 16:16, 21:3 & 25:1-2), was one of those through whom He chose to fulfill His purpose.

THE LESSON

At the age of seventy-five the Lord appeared to Abram (Abraham) and instructed him to leave his kindred and his country to a land that He (God) would show him (Gen 12:1-4). In obedience to God, Abram left his father's home with Sarai, his wife, Lot, his nephew, and all their possessions. God, having seen Abram's obedience, promised to bless him with a large family which would be realized through the birth of his son - Isaac.

In accordance with the promise God had made, Isaac was born when Abraham and Sarah were one hundred years and ninety years old respectively. His birth was miraculous, in that it was humanly impossible for Sarah to have had a child at that age (Gen 18:11). God commanded that the child be named Isaac (meaning laughter), possibly because of the reaction of Abraham (Gen 17:17) and later that of Sarah (Gen 18:12).

In Genesis 22, God ordered Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. He obeyed and upon reaching the point of offering him, God's angel restrained him. This act of obedience was then attributed to Abraham for righteousness (Gal.3:6). To cap it all, Genesis 22:18 is significant, as it points to the fact that through Isaac all nations of the earth would be blessed. Of importance, Matthew 1:1-2 includes Isaac in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

LESSON 8

JACOB - THE SON OF ISAAC

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

For study participants to be aware that God is a keeper of covenants

SCRIPTURE : Genesis 25:20-34 | **KEY VERSE** : Genesis 49:10

INTRODUCTION

Abram (later named Abraham) was called by God to leave his homeland to a place He would show him. There he would become a great nation and all the families of the earth would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:1-3; emphasis on verse 3). This would be made possible through the birth of a son, Isaac, in their old age. Years later, Isaac married Rebekah with whom he had twin sons. Of prophetic importance is that there was rivalry between the sons from within the womb, and at birth the second child (Jacob) clutched his brother Esau's heel. Esau became a hunter, while Jacob cared for his father's flock. Isaac loved Esau while Rebekah loved Jacob.

THE LESSON

Jacob, as defined by his name, was a “supplanter” or deceiver. He used his deceit to obtain his brother's birthright and later his blessing (Genesis 25:29-33; 27:35-36). As a result, he had to flee for his life to his uncle Laban in Padan-aram. On his journey to his uncle Laban, Jacob had an encounter with God, where he made a vow that if he were protected, provided for and reunited with his brother in peace, he would give a tenth of his possession to God. After many years, God instructed Jacob to return to his father's home in Canaan. He was now a rich man with much possession and a large family. On his journey home, he rested at place which he later called Peniel. There he wrestled with an angel and received a name change from Jacob to “Israel”. The reunion with his brother was peaceful, just as God had promised, and the relationship remained that way.

The twelve sons of Jacob, (Genesis 29:31-30:24), became the progenitors of the “Twelve Tribes of Israel”. The promise or covenant that God made with Abraham and renewed with Isaac was confirmed with Jacob and began to unfold through him. “In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” came alive when through the tribe of Judah, the Messiah – Jesus came. When Jacob blessed his sons, he said of Judah (his fourth son), “The scepter shall not

depart from Judah . . . until Shiloh come” (Genesis 49:10). This is referring to the Messiah, Jesus, through whom all the nations are blessed. Jesus made the eternal sacrifice so the entire human race can be blessed with eternal life, John 3:16-17. Jacob’s life reveals that God is in the business of transforming our trials and struggles for His purpose and for our good.

LESSON 9

JACOB: THE FATHER OF TWELVE

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

For those who study to know more about Jacob and his inclusion in the genealogy of Jesus.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 32 | **KEY VERSE:** NUMBERS 24:17

INTRODUCTION

Jacob is often spoken of as the ‘father of twelve’ because of his twelve sons who became leaders of the tribes of Israel. Very few speak of his only daughter, Dinah (Genesis 30:21). The name Jacob is many times linked with trickery, whether he was affected positively or negatively. The lesson will look at the man: his struggles, his determination, what made him the man he became and how he was included in the genealogy of Jesus.

THE LESSON

Jacob the younger twin brother of Esau, was born to Isaac and Rebekah. He lived a very checkered life which involved:

1. buying Esau’s birthright (Gen. 25:31-34)
2. getting the blessings meant for Esau (Gen.27:15-30)
3. marrying two sisters, having been tricked into marrying the first one (Gen. 29: 16-23, 28)
4. being tricked by his uncle/father-in-law (Gen 30:35-36)
5. becoming rich by tricking his uncle/father-in-law (Gen. 30:37-43).
6. the meeting with his estranged, brother, Esau (Gen. 33:1-4)

It would seem though that the most significant event in the life of Jacob had to do with an encounter he had with a man on his way back home (Gen.32:24). This man told him that his name would be changed to Israel and blessed him (Gen. 32:24-29). The prophet Hosea however speaks of the man as an angel (Hosea 12:4).

The events immediately after, as recorded in Genesis 33 (emphasis-1-4), showed that Jacob was a changed man. He was no longer thinking of himself and how to preserve self. He was now willing to face whatever life had to offer so he boldly met Esau and what a meeting it was! The 'pieces of the puzzle' were now falling in place for the further fulfillment of prophecies about Jacob who was told that through him and his descendants, all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 28:10-15). This was further spoken of by Baalam when he spoke of the star of Jacob – referring to Jesus (Num. 24:17 & 19).

ACTIVITY

In light of this Lesson, read and discuss Matt.1:1&2.

LESSON 10

JOSEPH'S SOJOURN IN EGYPT

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

For study participants to recognize the integral part Joseph played in preserving God's people (Israel) in Egypt.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 45 | **KEY VERSES:** Genesis 15:13 & 14

INTRODUCTION

The settling of Israel in Egypt was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Genesis 15:13-14. This prophecy was made by God to Abraham many years before Joseph went down to Egypt as a slave. While in Egypt Joseph rose from being a prisoner to becoming second in command to Pharaoh, thus having the privilege to request the relocation of his family from Canaan to Egypt to survive a seven-year famine.

THE LESSON

Joseph, the eleventh son of Jacob, was hated by his ten older brothers. This resulted in him being sold to Midianite/Ishmaelite traders, who in turn sold him to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's army officers (Gen. 37:13-36; 39:1). While in Potiphar's employ, Joseph gained the respect of Potiphar to the extent that he made him overseer of his house. While there Potiphar's wife who was attracted to this young man, tried without success to seduce him. Being unable to have her way with him however, she lied about him and had him imprisoned.

As a prisoner, Joseph interpreted the dreams of two other prisoners stating that one would be killed and the other would be restored to his job. The prisoner whose job was restored to him, told Pharaoh, when he had a troubling dream, that Joseph had powers to interpret dreams. Joseph was therefore called upon to interpret Pharaoh's dream and was subsequently promoted to be ruler over all the land of Egypt (Gen. 41:38-43).

Some years later, according to the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, a severe famine covered the whole earth, causing all countries to go to Egypt to buy corn (Gen 41:56-57). Joseph's father on hearing that plenty of food could be had in Egypt, sent his sons down to purchase corn (Gen. 42:1-3). Joseph recognized

his brothers and after their second visit, he revealed himself to them saying "... God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance" (Gen. 45:7). After this he requested of Pharaoh to have his family relocate to Egypt. This request was granted, and Jacob and all his household migrated and settled in Egypt.

As Israel was the nation/people through whom the Messiah would come, they therefore had to survive these seven (7) years of famine. God in His wisdom engineered circumstances in such a way, that Joseph was positioned to save His people from annihilation.

Like Joseph, all God's people should be willing to serve in ways that will be helpful to others on their journey to obtain Eternal Life.

LESSON 11

JUDAH: THE FATHER OF KINGS

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

For those who study to have a clearer knowledge of God working through the ages to preserve His initial plan for mankind.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 49 | **KEY VERSE:** Genesis 49:10

INTRODUCTION

Children are a heritage of the Lord (Psalm 127:3). Jacob, one of the two sons of Isaac and Rebekah, had 12 sons. They were a special set of children who were later referred to as the Twelve Tribes of Israel (Jacob's name was changed to Israel). This change was significant in the fulfilling of God's plan for His chosen people-the Israelites.

THE LESSON

When Jacob's time of departure from this life drew near, as was the custom in those days, he called his sons unto him and prophesied to them as to what they would become or accomplish (Genesis 49:3-27). Being inspired by God, Jacob, while telling his sons what would befall them, informed Judah, that the tribe of Judah would be the ruling tribe, and that the Messiah would come through him (Genesis 49:10). It was also confirmed by the prophet Micah that although Bethlehem was a small town in Judah, it would be the birth place of the Messiah.

It is interesting to note that Judah and Benjamin observed more of the Godly principles; and while the other tribes got lost among the other nations, they maintained their identity as representatives of the Southern Kingdom. It is noteworthy too, that all the kings after David were his direct descendants, therefore they were all belonging to the tribe of Judah. As Babylon was about to depose the last king of Judah, Ezekiel prophesied that the king would have his crown removed until One would come to whom it rightfully belonged (Ezekiel 21:26-27). This is a direct reference to Jacob's prophecy in Genesis 49:10.

God's plan for redemption was set from the foundation of the world and unfolded years later, when the Saviour (the Son of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke in 9:6-7) was born (Matthew 1:21). He came from the tribe of Judah (Matthew 2:5-6). Jesus, the centrepiece of history, came to redeem human beings so that they will have the opportunity of becoming members of the divine eternal family.

LESSON 12

MOSES & THE EXODUS

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

For study participants to understand Moses' role in God's plan for mankind.

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 6:1-8 | **KEY VERSE:** Exodus 3:7-8

INTRODUCTION

In Genesis 17:2-8, God made a covenant with Abraham which was later restated when He met with Isaac (Gen. 26:3) and Jacob (Gen. 28:10-15). Although the descendants of Abraham might have lived in Canaan for some time, they relocated to Egypt, because of a famine. While they were in Egypt they served as slaves for approximately 400 years. During this time, the promise would lie dormant until God raised up a deliverer in the person of Moses, who would start the process through which the prophecy would be realized.

THE LESSON

Total freedom was God's intention for man when He created the Garden of Eden. Man however, through disobedience, lost this privilege, and was eventually enslaved by the Egyptians. Consequent on His desire for man to once again enjoy freedom, God called Moses through the experience of the burning bush, to lead His people from bondage (Ex. 3:2-12).

Moses through God's power had to perform many miracles - the ten plagues - to persuade the king, before the Children of Israel were allowed to leave Egypt. And while they were on their journey out of Egypt God used Moses to take them safely through the Red Sea in order to finally escape Pharaoh's army. When Moses and the Israelites reached Mount Sinai, God reminded them of His covenant (Ex. 19:5).

The exodus from Egypt was significant in that God was mobilizing His people to be re-established in the land He had promised to Abraham. This was also important, in that the stage would now be set for the tribe of Judah to play the prominent role in fulfilling the prophecy regarding the coming of Jesus. God took His people from Egypt (bondage) to the Promised Land (freedom). This transition is symbolic of Jesus' redemptive power to deliver mankind from the bondage of sin into the spiritual promised land.

ACTIVITIES

In light of this Lesson, share some promises God made to the Israelites that could help us on our journey.

State any lesson that could be learnt from the study to help us better appreciate the importance of conforming to God's will as we seek to enter Eternal Rest.

LESSON 13

GOD MEETS WITH HIS PEOPLE

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

To demonstrate that God:

- i. would meet with His people in a variety of ways/places, even before a designated place was established for this purpose;
- ii. values a close relationship with His people and requires that we play our part in maintaining such relationship.

SCRIPTURES: Exodus 3:1-6 & 1 Samuel 3:1-11

KEY VERSES: Hebrews 1:1-2

INTRODUCTION

Since God created mankind, it has always been His delight to meet and communicate with His created beings. It is clearly demonstrated throughout the pages of the Bible that He strongly desires to have a relationship with us. Just as newborn babies need to constantly hear the voice of their parents and feel their embrace, it was essential for Adam and Eve to have that fellowship and communion with their Creator.

This bond was cemented as God met and communicated with them in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8-9). The relationship was compromised, however, when they disobeyed God's instructions and ate of the tree in the midst of the Garden. Despite this separation, God provided for them in covering their nakedness and devised ways for them to remain in contact with Him.

THE LESSON

Scripture informs that the Lord appeared to the patriarchs in several ways as he revealed His will. In some instances, we are told that God simply spoke to them in audible tones, while at other times He appeared in some physical manifestation, and at times in dreams.

For instance:

1. “Noah walked with God” and God spoke to him, giving him instructions concerning the building of an Ark (Gen. 6:9, 12-16). While we are not very clear as to how this actually occurred, we know that Noah was convinced that he was being directed by the Sovereign Creator;
2. Abram, was renamed Abraham, was told by God that he should leave his father’s house to a land that He would show him (Gen. 12:1). He again met with Abraham several times through dreams, through angels and in the form of a man (Gen. 17:1; 18:1-2);
3. Jacob met and wrestled with an angel and demanded a blessing as he returned to face the expected wrath of his brother, Esau (Genesis 32:24 & Hosea 12:2-4);
4. Moses was called by God when he went to investigate a burning bush which was not being consumed (Ex. 3:1-4);

Today, God still meets with His people who willingly desire to have a relationship with Him. In Jeremiah 29:13, the prophet told the captives that if they sought God with their whole heart they would find Him. Jesus puts it this way, “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Luke 11:9).

The Bible is the surest way to meet with God in this time. God speaks to this generation through the written word (2 Peter 1:19; 2 Tim. 3:16), and the Holy Ghost is given to support our understanding of the scripture and to help us to remember what is written (John 14:26). As was the case in the days of the patriarchs, so it is today that God requires willing and obedient hearts in order for us to experience the blessings and joy of meeting with Him (Isaiah 1:19; Acts 8:37).

For Further Discussion

Does God still speak with His people in these days?
Support your answer with scriptural reference(s).

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Home Study for Lesson 14: Exodus 20:1-17 & Leviticus 23

LESSON 14

GOD GIVES HIS LAWS

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

For those who study to:

- i. understand how God used His laws to preserve His people;
- ii. appreciate how God worked through the ages to preserve His initial plan for mankind.

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 10:1-18 | **KEY VERSE:** Deut.14:2

INTRODUCTION

According to the Oxford online dictionary, the word “peculiar” is defined as; different to what is normal or expected. In today’s lesson we will see where God outlines His expectations of those who should be His peculiar people. Among these expectations were the civil & ceremonial laws, (Deut. 24:10-11 & Lev. 23). All these laws governed the lives of His chosen people/prototype for the human race; and thus, made them special and peculiar among the nations on the earth at that time.

THE LESSON

Abraham was called many years after the Flood to be the father of this peculiar nation (the Israelites). Years later God chose Moses from Abraham’s lineage to deliver and lead His people from Egypt to the Promised Land. God at Mount Sinai reminded the Israelites of his Moral laws or Ten Commandments, in the event they might have forgotten them during their over 400 years in Egypt.

These Commandments (God’s direct hand-written laws) are for all mankind and not only the Israelites or the Jewish nation. These laws are very applicable to us today because Jesus said in Matthew 5:17-18 “think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets;...but to fulfil”. He also taught that obeying the 10 Commandments is essential for entering into eternal life (Matthew 19:16-19). It would therefore seem ridiculous to believe that the Ten Commandments are no longer valid or relevant today especially since references of their significance


were made after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus (1 John 2:4 & Rev. 14:12).

Along with the moral laws, God also gave Moses the ceremonial laws which included sacrifices as the atonement for sin and civil laws to govern the people as a nation. Having died for our sins, Jesus brought an end to animal sacrifices, thus blotting out the handwriting of ordinances (Galatians 3:24-25 & Colossians 2:14).

Therefore, as Christians, we today need to appreciate the fact that salvation has been offered to all humanity. Once we accept Him as the Lord and Saviour of our lives, as outlined in John 3:16, we would be engrafted into God's wonderful family.

Let us therefore strive to remain peculiar in the sight of God, by walking in His ways as true disciples.

Notes



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