

Lesson 8

Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant

Sabbath Afternoon, February 12

Even before He took humanity upon Him, He saw the whole length of the path He must travel in order to save that which was lost. Every pang that rent His heart, every insult that was heaped upon His head, every privation that He was called to endure, was open to His view before He laid aside His crown and royal robe, and stepped down from the throne, to clothe His divinity with humanity. The path from the manger to Calvary was all before His eyes. He knew the anguish that would come upon Him. He knew it all, and yet He said, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:7, 8.

Ever before Him He saw the result of His mission. His earthly life, so full of toil and self-sacrifice, was cheered by the prospect that He would not have all this travail for nought. By giving His life for the life of men, He would win back the world to its loyalty to God. Although the baptism of blood must first be received; although the sins of the world were to weigh upon His innocent soul; although the shadow of an unspeakable woe was upon Him; yet for the joy that was set before Him, He chose to endure the cross, and despised the shame.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 410.

Christ came to magnify the law and to make it honorable; He came to extol the old commandment which ye had from the beginning. Then we need the law and the prophets. We need the Old Testament to bring us down along the line to the New Testament, which does not take the place of the Old Testament, but more distinctly reveals to us the plan of salvation, giving significance to the whole system of sacrifices and offerings, and to the word which we had from the beginning. Perfect obedience is enjoined upon every soul, and obedience to the expressed will of God will make you one with Christ. ... Of Him it is written, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”

—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 48.

So deep was the Lord’s interest in the beings He had created, so great His love for the world, that He “gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Christ came to bring moral power to man, to elevate, ennoble, and strengthen him, enabling him to be a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. He proved to the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds and to human beings that the law can be kept. While possessing the nature of man, He obeyed the law of God, vindicating God’s justice in demanding that it be obeyed. In the judgment His life will be an unanswerable argument in favor of God’s law.

—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 38.

Sunday, February 13: The Need of a New Covenant

The sins of the people were transferred in figure to the officiating priest, who was a mediator for the people. The priest could not himself become an offering for sin, and make an atonement with his life, for he was also a sinner. Therefore, instead of suffering death himself, he killed a lamb without blemish; the penalty of sin was transferred to the innocent beast, which thus became his immediate substitute, and typified the perfect offering of Jesus Christ. Through the blood of this victim, man looked forward by faith to the blood of Christ which would atone for the sins of the world.

—**Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1111.**

Paul endeavored to direct the minds of his hearers to the one great Sacrifice for sin. He pointed to the sacrifices that were shadows of good things to come, and then presented Christ as the antitype of all those ceremonies—the object to which they pointed as the only source of life and hope for fallen man. Holy men of old were saved by faith in the blood of Christ. As they saw the dying agonies of the sacrificial victims they looked across the gulf of ages to the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world.

God justly claims the love and obedience of all His creatures. He has given them in His law a perfect standard of right. But many forget their Maker and choose to follow their own way in opposition to His will. They return enmity for love that is as high as heaven and as broad as the universe. God cannot lower the requirements of His law to meet the standard of wicked men; neither can man in his own power meet the demands of the law. Only by faith in Christ can the sinner be cleansed from guilt and be enabled to render obedience to the law of his Maker.

—***The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 424, 425.**

So great has been the spiritual blindness of men that they have sought to make of none effect the Word of God. They have declared by their traditions that the great plan of redemption was devised in order to abolish and make of none effect the law of God, when Calvary is the mighty argument that proves the immutability of the precepts of Jehovah. ... The state of the character must be compared with the great moral standard of righteousness. There must be a searching out of the peculiar sins which have been offensive to God, which have dishonored His name and quenched the light of His Spirit and killed the first love from the soul.

Victory is assured through faith and obedience. ... The work of overcoming is not restricted to the age of the martyrs. The conflict is for us, in these days of subtle temptation to worldliness, to self-security, to indulgence of pride, covetousness, false doctrines, and immorality of life. ... Shall we stand before the proving of God?

—***That I May Know Him*, p. 256.**

Monday, February 14: New and Renewed

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 ministrations were 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. He is withdrawn from the eye of sense, but His parting promise is fulfilled, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20. While He delegates His power to inferior ministers, His energizing presence is still with His church.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 166.

[Paul] desired those to whom he was writing to remember that they must reveal in their lives the glorious change wrought in them by Christ’s transforming grace. They were to be lights in the world, by their purified, sanctified characters exerting an influence counter to the influence of satanic agencies. They were ever to remember the words, “Not of yourselves.” They could not change their own hearts. And when by their efforts souls were led from the ranks of Satan to take their stand for Christ, they were not to claim any credit for the transformation wrought. ...

The great change that is seen in the life of a sinner after conversion is not brought about by any human goodness.

He who is rich in mercy has imparted His grace to us. Then let praise and thanksgiving ascend to Him, because He has become our Saviour. Let His love, filling our hearts and minds, flow forth from our lives in rich currents of grace. When we were dead in trespasses and sins, He quickened us into spiritual life. He brought grace and pardon, filling the soul with new life.

—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 319.

Tuesday, February 15: The New Covenant Has a Better Mediator

The law of God's government was to be magnified by the death of God's only begotten Son. Christ bore the guilt of the sins of the world. Our sufficiency is found only in the incarnation and death of the Son of God. He could suffer, because sustained by divinity. He could endure, because He was without one taint of disloyalty or sin. Christ triumphed in man's behalf in thus bearing the justice of punishment. He secured eternal life to men, while He exalted the law, and made it honorable.

Every soul is under obligation to follow in the footsteps of Christ, the great example for the human family. He said, "I have kept my Father's commandments." The Pharisees thought that He was seeking to lessen the claims of the law of God, but His voice rang out upon their ears saying, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 48.

To the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos were revealed the things which God desired him to give to the people. Study these revelations. Here are themes worthy of our contemplation, large and comprehensive lessons which all the angelic host are now seeking to communicate. Behold the life and character of Christ, and study His mediatorial work. Here is infinite wisdom, infinite love, infinite justice, infinite mercy. Here are depths and heights, lengths and breadths, for our consideration. Numberless pens have been employed in presenting to the world the life, the character, and the mediatorial work of Christ, and yet every mind through which the Holy Spirit has worked has presented these themes in a light that is fresh and new.

We desire to lead the people to understand what Christ is to them and what are the responsibilities they are called upon to accept in Him. As His representatives and witnesses, we ourselves need to come to a full understanding of the saving truths gained by an experimental knowledge.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 59.

Wednesday, February 16: The New Covenant Has Better Promises

Of special value to God's church on earth today—the keepers of His vineyard—are the messages of counsel and admonition given through the prophets who have made plain His eternal purpose in behalf of mankind. In the teachings of the prophets, His love for the lost race and His plan for their salvation are clearly revealed. The story of Israel's call, of their successes and failures, of their restoration to divine favor, of their rejection of the Master of the vineyard, and of the carrying out of the plan of the ages by a goodly remnant to whom are to be fulfilled all the covenant promises—this has been the theme of God's messengers to His church throughout the centuries that have passed. ...

Let Israel hope in God. The Master of the vineyard is even now gathering from among men of all nations and peoples the precious fruits for which He has long been waiting. Soon He will come unto His own; and in that glad day His eternal purpose for the house of Israel will finally be fulfilled.—Prophets and Kings, p. 22.

The precious Bible is the garden of God, and His promises are the lilies, and the roses, and the pinks.

How I wish that we might all believe in the promises of God. ... We are not to look into our hearts for a joyful emotion as an evidence of our acceptance with Heaven, but we are to take God's promises and say, "They are mine. The Lord is letting His Holy Spirit rest upon me. I am receiving the light; for the promise is, 'Believe that ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them.' By faith I reach within the veil and lay hold of Christ, my strength. I thank God that I have a Saviour." ...

... [In the] promises of God's Word ... He is speaking to us individually, speaking as directly as if we could listen to His voice. It is in these promises that Christ communicates to us His grace and power. They are leaves from that tree which is "for the healing of the nations." Received, assimilated, they are to be the strength of the character, the inspiration and sustenance of the life.

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 9.

Christ came to the earth and stood before the children of men with the hoarded love of eternity, and this is the treasure that, through our connection with Him, we are to receive, to reveal, and to impart.

Human effort will be efficient in the work of God just according to the consecrated devotion of the worker— by revealing the power of the grace of Christ to transform the life. We are to be distinguished from the world because God has placed His seal upon us, because He manifests in us His own character of love. Our Redeemer covers us with His righteousness.

—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 37.

Thursday, February 17: The New Covenant Has Solved the Problem of the Heart

In the Bible the will of God is revealed. The truths of the Word of God are the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding is removed. The words, “A new heart also will I give you,” mean, “A new mind will I give you.” A change of heart is always attended by a clear conviction of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher plane of intelligence.—My Life Today, p. 24.

[Jesus] came to give to men new hearts. He said, “A new heart also will I give you.” But the self-righteous of that day and of this day feel no need of having a new heart. Jesus passed by the scribes and the Pharisees, for they felt no need of a Saviour. They were wedded to forms and ceremonies. These services had been instituted by Christ; they had been full of vitality and spiritual beauty; but the Jews had lost the spiritual life from their ceremonies, and clung to the dead forms after spiritual life was extinct among them. When they departed from the requirements and commandments of God, they sought to supply the place of that which they had lost, by multiplying their own requirements, and making more rigorous demands than had God; and the more rigid they grew, the less of the love and Spirit of God they manifested.

—Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 386, 387.

One of the most earnest prayers recorded in the Word of God is that of David when he pleaded, “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” Psalm 51:10. God’s response to such a prayer is, A new heart will I give you. This is a work that no finite man can do. Men and women are to begin at the beginning, seeking God most earnestly for a true Christian experience. They are to feel the creative power of the Holy Spirit. They are to receive the new heart, that is kept soft and tender by the grace of heaven. The selfish spirit is to be cleansed from the soul. They are to labor earnestly and with humility of heart, each one looking to Jesus for guidance and encouragement. Then the building, fitly framed together, will grow into a holy temple in the Lord.

—Our High Calling, p. 159.

How, then, are we to be saved? “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,” so the Son of man has been lifted up, and everyone who has been deceived and bitten by the serpent may look and live. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29. The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God.” Psalm 40:8.

—The Desire of Ages, pp. 175, 176.

Friday, February 18: For Further Reading

This Day With God, “Assurance of Victory,” p. 84;

Our High Calling, “Feeling and Faith Distinct,” p. 120.