

Lesson 13

Israel in Egypt

Sabbath Afternoon, June 18

On account of the service that Joseph had rendered the Egyptian nation, [the children of Jacob] were not only granted a part of the country as a home, but were exempted from taxation, and liberally supplied with food during the continuance of the famine. The king publicly acknowledged that it was through the merciful interposition of the God of Joseph that Egypt enjoyed plenty while other nations were perishing from famine. He saw, too, that Joseph's management had greatly enriched the kingdom, and his gratitude surrounded the family of Jacob with royal favor.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 241.

The dealings of God with His people should be often repeated. How frequently were the waymarks set up by the Lord in His dealings with ancient Israel! Lest they should forget the history of the past, He commanded Moses to frame these events into song, that parents might teach them to their children. They were to gather up memorials and to lay them up in sight. Special pains were taken to preserve them, that when the children should inquire concerning these things, the whole story might be repeated. Thus the providential dealings and the marked goodness and mercy of God in His care and deliverance of His people were kept in mind. We are exhorted to call to "remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions." Hebrews 10:32. For His people in this generation the Lord has wrought as a wonder-working God. The past history of the cause of God needs to be often brought before the people, young and old. We need often to recount God's goodness and to praise Him for His wonderful works.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 364, 365.

In the providence of God, we are daily brought into connection with the unconverted. By His own right hand God is preparing the way before us, in order that His work may progress rapidly. As colaborers with Him, we have a sacred work to do. We are to have travail of soul for those who are in high places; we are to extend to them the gracious invitation to come to the marriage feast.

Although now almost wholly in the possession of wicked men, all the world, with its riches and treasures, belongs to God. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." . . . O that Christians might realize more and still more fully that it is their privilege and their duty, while cherishing right principles, to take advantage of every heaven-sent opportunity for advancing God's kingdom in this world!

—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 186.

Sunday, June 19: Jacob Goes to Joseph

Upon reaching Egypt the company proceeded directly to the land of Goshen. Thither came Joseph in his chariot of state, attended by a princely retinue. The splendor of his surroundings and the dignity of his position were alike forgotten; one thought alone filled his mind, one longing thrilled his heart. As he beheld the travelers approaching, the love whose yearnings had for so many long years been repressed, would no longer be controlled. He sprang from his chariot and hastened forward to bid his father welcome. “And he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.”

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 233.

Pharaoh appreciated [Joseph’s] wisdom in the management of all things connected with the kingdom, especially in the preparations for the long years of famine which came upon the land of Egypt. He felt that the whole kingdom was indebted for their prosperity to the wise management of Joseph; and, as a token of his gratitude, he said to Joseph, “The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell. . . .”

“And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father’s household, with bread, according to their families.”

—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 103, 104.

Though the Egyptians had so long rejected the knowledge of God, the Lord still gave them opportunity for repentance. In the days of Joseph, Egypt had been an asylum for Israel; God had been honored in the kindness shown His people; and now the long-suffering One, slow to anger, and full of compassion, gave each judgment time to do its work; the Egyptians, cursed through the very objects they had worshiped, had evidence of the power of Jehovah, and all who would, might submit to God and escape His judgments.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 333.

Caste is hateful to God. He ignores everything of this character. In His sight the souls of all men are of equal value. He “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us.” Without distinction of age, or rank, or nationality, or religious privilege, all are invited to come unto Him and live. . . . “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free.” . . . “The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Acts 17:26, 27; Galatians 3:28; Romans 10:11-13.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 403.

Monday, June 20: Jacob Settles in Egypt

Not long after their arrival Joseph brought his father also to be presented to the king. The patriarch was a stranger in royal courts; but amid the sublime scenes of nature he had communed with a mightier Monarch; and now, in conscious superiority, he raised his hands and blessed Pharaoh.

In his first greeting to Joseph, Jacob had spoken as if, with this joyful ending to his long anxiety and sorrow, he was ready to die. But seventeen years were yet to be granted him in the peaceful retirement of Goshen. These years were in happy contrast to those that had preceded them. He saw in his sons evidence of true repentance; he saw his family surrounded by all the conditions needful for the development of a great nation; and his faith grasped the sure promise of their future establishment in Canaan. He himself was surrounded with every token of love and favor that the prime minister of Egypt could bestow; and happy in the society of his long-lost son, he passed down gently and peacefully to the grave.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 233.

The continuity of Christian influence is the secret of its power, and this depends on the steadfastness of your manifestation of the character of Christ. Help those who have erred, by telling them of your experiences. Show how, when you made grave mistakes, patience, kindness, and helpfulness on the part of your fellow workers gave you courage and hope.

Until the judgment you will never know the influence of a kind, considerate course toward the inconsistent, the unreasonable, the unworthy. When we meet with ingratitude and betrayal of sacred trusts, we are roused to show our contempt or indignation. This the guilty expect; they are prepared for it. But kind forbearance takes them by surprise and often awakens their better impulses and arouses a longing for a nobler life.

—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 494, 495.

The Laodicean message is applicable to the church at this time. Do you believe this message? Have you hearts that feel? Or are you constantly saying, We are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing? Is it in vain that the declaration of eternal truth has been given to this nation to be carried to all the nations of the world? God has chosen a people and made them the repositories of truth weighty with eternal results. To them has been given the light that must illuminate the world. Has God made a mistake? Are we indeed His chosen instrumentalities? Are we the men and women who are to bear to the world the messages of Revelation fourteen, to proclaim the message of salvation to those who are standing on the brink of ruin? Do we act as if we were?

The Laodicean message applies to all who profess to keep the law of God, and yet are not doers of it. We are not to be selfish in anything. Every phase of the Christian life is to be a representation of the life of Christ.

—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 961, 962.

Tuesday, June 21: Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons

As he felt death approaching, [Jacob] sent for Joseph. . . .

[An] important matter demanded attention; the sons of Joseph were to be formally instated among the children of Israel. Joseph, coming for a last interview with his father, brought with him Ephraim and Manasseh. . . . It was Joseph's desire . . . that they should unite with their own people. He manifested his faith in the covenant promise, in behalf of his sons renouncing all the honors that the court of Egypt offered, for a place among the despised shepherd tribes, to whom had been entrusted the oracles of God.

Said Jacob, "Thy two sons, Ephraim, and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine." They were to be adopted as his own, and to become the heads of separate tribes. Thus one of the birthright privileges, which Reuben had forfeited, was to fall to Joseph—a double portion in Israel. . . .

. . . As [Joseph's sons] came nearer, the patriarch embraced and kissed them, solemnly laying his hands upon their heads in benediction. Then he uttered the prayer, "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." There was no spirit of self-dependence, no reliance upon human power or cunning now. God had been his preserver and support. There was no complaint of the evil days in the past. Its trials and sorrows were no longer regarded as things that were "against" him. Memory recalled only His mercy and loving-kindness who had been with him throughout his pilgrimage.

The blessing ended, Jacob gave his son the assurance—leaving for the generations to come, through long years of bondage and sorrow, this testimony to his faith—"Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers."

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 234, 235.

The hope of Israel was embodied in the promise made at the time of the call of Abraham, and afterward repeated again and again to his posterity, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 12:3. As the purpose of God for the redemption of the race was unfolded to Abraham, the Sun of Righteousness shone upon his heart, and his darkness was scattered. And when, at last, the Saviour Himself walked and talked among the sons of men, He bore witness to the Jews of the patriarch's bright hope of deliverance through the coming of a Redeemer. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day," Christ declared; "and he saw it, and was glad." John 8:56.

—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 683.

Wednesday, June 22: Jacob Blesses His Sons

At the last all the sons of Jacob were gathered about his dying bed. And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, “Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father,” “that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.” Often and anxiously he had thought of their future, and had endeavored to picture to himself the history of the different tribes. Now as his children waited to receive his last blessing the Spirit of Inspiration rested upon him, and before him in prophetic vision the future of his descendants was unfolded. One after another the names of his sons were mentioned, the character of each was described, and the future history of the tribes was briefly foretold. . . .

The priesthood was apportioned to Levi, the kingdom and the Messianic promise to Judah, and the double portion of the inheritance to Joseph. The tribe of Reuben never rose to any eminence in Israel; it was not so numerous as Judah, Joseph, or Dan, and was among the first that were carried into captivity.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 235.

Jacob had ever been a man of deep and ardent affection; his love for his sons was strong and tender, and his dying testimony to them was not the utterance of partiality or resentment. He had forgiven them all, and he loved them to the last. His paternal tenderness would have found expression only in words of encouragement and hope; but the power of God rested upon him, and under the influence of Inspiration he was constrained to declare the truth, however painful.

The last blessings pronounced, Jacob repeated the charge concerning his burial place: “I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers . . . in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah.” “There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.” Thus the last act of his life was to manifest his faith in God’s promise.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 237.

Not all in this world have taken sides with the enemy against God. Not all have become disloyal. There are a faithful few who are true to God; for John writes: “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12. Soon the battle will be waged fiercely between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. Soon everything that can be shaken will be shaken, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain. . . .

. . . God’s tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12-18. They are to take their stand on the living word: “It is written.” This is the only foundation upon which they can stand securely. Those who have broken their covenant with God will in that day be without God and without hope.

The worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandment, since this is the sign of God’s creative power and the witness to His claim upon man’s reverence and homage.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 15, 16.

Thursday, June 23: The Hope of the Promised Land

Jacob and his sons had brought their flocks and herds with them to Egypt, where they had greatly increased. Before leaving Egypt, the people, by the direction of Moses, claimed a recompense for their unpaid labor; and the Egyptians were too eager to be freed from their presence to refuse them. The bondmen went forth laden with the spoil of their oppressors.

That day completed the history revealed to Abraham in prophetic vision centuries before: “Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.” Genesis 15:13, 14. [See appendix, note 3.] The four hundred years had been fulfilled. “And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.” In their departure from Egypt the Israelites bore with them a precious legacy, in the bones of Joseph, which had so long awaited the fulfillment of God’s promise, and which, during the dark years of bondage, had been a reminder of Israel’s deliverance.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 281.

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.

All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying.

He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord’s permission, and “all things” that are permitted “work together for good to them that love God.”

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 64.

[The] hope of redemption through the advent of the Son of God as Saviour and King, has never become extinct in the hearts of men. From the beginning there have been some whose faith has reached out beyond the shadows of the present to the realities of the future. Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—through these and other worthies the Lord has preserved the precious revealings of His will. And it was thus that to the children of Israel, the chosen people through whom was to be given to the world the promised Messiah, God imparted a knowledge of the requirements of His law, and of the salvation to be accomplished through the atoning sacrifice of His beloved Son.

—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 682, 683.

Friday, June 24: For Further Reading

This Day With God, “Set Your Affections on Heaven,” p. 290;

My Life Today, “Doubt Not,” p. 185.