

## Lesson 5

### Extreme Heat

### Sabbath Afternoon, July 23

God permitted His beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory, to a world marred and blighted with sin, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted Him to leave the bosom of His love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. . . .

But this great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father's heart a love for man, not to make Him willing to save. No, no! "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption.

—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 13, 14.

In the vision that came to Isaiah in the temple court, he was given a clear view of the character of the God of Israel. "The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy," had appeared before him in great majesty; yet the prophet was made to understand the compassionate nature of his Lord. He who dwells "in the high and holy place" dwells "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15. . . .

In beholding his God, the prophet, like Saul of Tarsus at the gate of Damascus, had not only been given a view of his own unworthiness; there had come to his humbled heart the assurance of forgiveness, full and free; and he had arisen a changed man. He had seen his Lord. He had caught a glimpse of the loveliness of the divine character.

—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 314.

Men are losing their knowledge of [God's] character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. . . . His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth.

. . . Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.

The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works— in words of truth and deeds of holiness.

—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 415, 416.

Sunday, July 24

## Abraham in the Crucible

What is temptation?—It is the means by which those who claim to be the children of God are tested and tried. We read that God tempted Abraham, that He tempted the children of Israel. This means that He permitted circumstances to occur to test their faith, and lead them to look to Him for help. God permits temptation to come to His people today, that they may realize that He is their helper. If they draw nigh to Him when they are tempted, He strengthens them to meet the temptation. But if they yield to the enemy, neglecting to place themselves close to their Almighty Helper, they are overcome. They separate themselves from God. They do not give evidence that they walk in God's way.

—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1094.

Abraham's test was the most severe that could come to a human being. Had he failed under it, he would never have been registered as the father of the faithful. Had he deviated from God's command, the world would have lost an inspiring example of unquestioning faith and obedience. The lesson was given to shine down through the ages, that we may learn that there is nothing too precious to be given to God. It is when we look upon every gift as the Lord's, to be used in His service, that we secure the heavenly benediction. Give back to God your entrusted possession, and more will be entrusted to you. Keep your possessions to yourself, and you will receive no reward in this life, and will lose the reward of the life to come. . . .

. . . The offering of Isaac was designed by God to prefigure the sacrifice of His Son. Isaac was a figure of the Son of God, who was offered a sacrifice for the sins of the world. God desired to impress upon Abraham the gospel of salvation to men; and in order to make the truth a reality, and to test his faith, He required Abraham to slay his darling Isaac. All the agony that Abraham endured during that dark and fearful trial was for the purpose of deeply impressing upon his understanding the plan of redemption for fallen man.

—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1094.

Just such faith and confidence as Abraham had the messengers of God need today. But many whom the Lord could use will not move onward, hearing and obeying the one Voice above all others. The connection with kindred and friends, the former habits and associations, too often have so great an influence upon God's servants that He can give them but little instruction, can communicate to them but little knowledge of His purposes; and often after a time He sets them aside and calls others in their place, whom He proves and tests in the same manner. The Lord would do much more for His servants if they were wholly consecrated to Him, esteeming His service above the ties of kindred and all other earthly associations.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 524.

Monday, July 25

Wayward Israel

The Lord did not give Israel up without first doing all that could be done to lead them back to their allegiance to Him. Through long, dark years when ruler after ruler stood up in bold defiance of Heaven and led Israel deeper and still deeper into idolatry, God sent message after message to His backslidden people. Through His prophets He gave them every opportunity to stay the tide of apostasy and to return to Him. During the years that were to follow the rending of the kingdom, Elijah and Elisha were to live and labor, and the tender appeals of Hosea and Amos and Obadiah were to be heard in the land. Never was the kingdom of Israel to be left without noble witnesses to the mighty power of God to save from sin. Even in the darkest hours some would remain true to their divine Ruler and in the midst of idolatry would live blameless in the sight of a holy God. These faithful ones were numbered among the goodly remnant through whom the eternal purpose of Jehovah was finally to be fulfilled.

—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 108.

Many complain that Jesus seems a long way off. Who has placed Him a long way off? Has it not been your own course of action that has separated you from Jesus? He has not forsaken you, but you have forsaken Him for other lovers. It is when you wander from His side, and are charmed with the voice of the seducer, and fasten your affections upon some trifling thing, that you are in danger of losing your peace and trust and confidence in God. Then it is that Satan presents to you the thought that Jesus has forsaken you; but is it not that you have forsaken Jesus? . . .

. . . [Many have] ideas of Christ and the plan of salvation [that] are vague, dreary, and confused. If they had, like David, set the Lord ever before them, . . . their feet would be upon solid rock. Behold Jesus crucified for you. Behold Him grieved with your sins; and when you pray, repent, and earnestly desire to see Him as your sin-pardoning Redeemer, ready to bless you, and to hear your acknowledgment of Him. Keep close to His side.

—*Our High Calling*, p. 30.

We need an abiding, heartfelt dependence upon the Son of God for salvation and for all wisdom and spiritual influences. Unless there is much more love to God and to man, and a continual dependence upon the renewing, sanctifying grace of Christ to work a transformation of character by a divine change in the heart, which will be manifestly seen in word, spirit, and action, we shall fail in our work. . . .

We need increased faith, far less confidence and assurance in what we can do, and far greater confidence in what the Lord is longing to do for us individually, if we will prepare the way for Him. We need, O so much more than we now have, the longing of soul for communion with God. We need to plead most earnestly with Him. If thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, when thou shalt seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

—*The Upward Look*, p. 333.

Tuesday, July 26

## Surviving Through Worship

There is wickedness in our world, but all the suffering is not the result of a perverted course of life. Job is brought distinctly before us as a man whom the Lord allowed Satan to afflict. The enemy stripped him of all he possessed; his family ties were broken; his children were taken from him. For a time his body was covered with loathsome sores, and he suffered greatly. His friends came to comfort him, but they tried to make him see that he was responsible, by his sinful course, for his afflictions. But he defended himself, and denied the charge, declaring, Miserable comforters are ye all. By seeking to make him guilty before God, and deserving of His punishment, they brought a grievous test upon him, and represented God in a false light; but Job did not swerve from his loyalty, and God rewarded His faithful servant.

—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1140.

We have drunk at the same cup of sorrow, but it was mingled with joy and rest and peace in Jesus. He doeth all things well. Our heavenly Father doth not willingly afflict and grieve the children of men. . . .

This world is the scene of our trials, our griefs, our sorrows. We are here to bear the test of God. The fire of the furnace is to kindle till our dross is consumed and we come forth as gold purified in the furnace of affliction. Light will come out of this darkness which to you at times seems incomprehensible. “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21). Let this be the language of your heart. The cloud of mercy is hovering over your head even in the darkest hour. God’s benefits to us are as numerous as the drops of rain falling from the clouds upon the parched earth to water and refresh it. The mercy of God is over you. . . .

Could your eyes be opened, you would see your heavenly Father bending over you in love; and could you hear His voice it would be in tones of compassion to you who are prostrate with suffering and affliction.

Stand fast in His strength; there is rest for you.

—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 272.

In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous.

The power and malice of Satan and his host might justly alarm us, were it not that we may find shelter and deliverance in the superior power of our Redeemer. Those who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people.

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 328.

## Wednesday, July 27

### Surviving Through Hope

By contemplation of Christ, by conformity to the divine likeness, your conceptions of the divine character will expand, and your mind and heart will be elevated, refined, and ennobled. Let the youth aim high, not relying upon human wisdom, but living day by day as seeing Him who is invisible, doing their work as in the sight of the intelligences of heaven. ...

He who constantly depends upon God through simple trust and prayerful confidence, will be surrounded by the angels of heaven. He who lives by faith in Christ, will be strengthened and upheld, able to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon eternal life.

—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 16.

Those who have borne the greatest sorrows are frequently the ones who carry the greatest comfort to others, bringing sunshine wherever they go. Such ones have been chastened and sweetened by their afflictions; they did not lose confidence in God when trouble assailed them, but clung closer to His protecting love. Such ones are living proof of the tender care of God, who makes the darkness as well as the light and chastens us for our good. Christ is the light of the world; in Him is no darkness. Precious light! Let us live in that light! Bid adieu to sadness and repining. Rejoice in the Lord always.

It is your privilege to receive grace from Christ that will enable you to comfort others with the same comfort wherewith you yourselves are comforted of God. . . . Let each try to help the next one. Thus you may have a little heaven here below, and angels of God will work through you to make right impressions. . . . Seek to help wherever you can. Cultivate the best dispositions that the grace of God may rest richly upon you.

— *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 122.

A Christian . . . feels his weakness, he lays hold with earnest purpose and living faith upon the strength of God, and is an overcomer. Great becomes his peace, his joy, for it comes from the Lord, and there is nothing more acceptable in the sight of God than the continual humiliation of the soul before Him. These evidences are unmistakable proofs that the Lord has touched hearts by His Holy Spirit. More wonderful than miracles of physical healing is the miracle wrought in the child of God in wrestling with natural defects and overcoming them. The universe of God looks upon him with joy far greater than on any splendid outward display. The inward character is molded after the divine Pattern. . . .

. . . This is done only through the light reflected from the cross of Calvary. The law is complete and full in the great plan of salvation, only as it is presented in the light shining from the crucified and risen Saviour. This can be only spiritually discerned. It kindles in the heart of the beholder ardent faith, hope, and joy that Christ is his righteousness. This joy is only for those who love and keep the words of Jesus, which are the words of God.

—*Lift Him Up*, p. 150.

Thursday, July 28

Extreme Heat

As the shepherd leads his flock over the rocky hills, through forest and wild ravines, to grassy nooks by the riverside; as he watches them on the mountains through the lonely night, shielding from robbers, caring tenderly for the sickly and feeble, his life comes to be one with theirs. A strong and tender attachment unites him to the objects of his care. However large the flock, the shepherd knows every sheep. Every one has its name, and responds to the name at the shepherd's call.

As an earthly shepherd knows his sheep, so does the divine shepherd know His flock that are scattered throughout the world. "Ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God." Jesus says, "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands" (Ezekiel 34:31; Isaiah 43:1; 49:16).

—*Lift Him Up*, p. 203.

When trouble comes upon us, how often we are like Peter! We look upon the waves, instead of keeping our eyes fixed upon the Saviour. Our footsteps slide, and the proud waters go over our souls. Jesus did not bid Peter come to Him that he should perish; He does not call us to follow Him, and then forsake us. "Fear not," He says. . . . "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Isaiah 43:1-3.

Jesus read the character of His disciples. He knew how sorely their faith was to be tried. In this incident on the sea He desired to reveal to Peter his own weakness,—to show that his safety was in constant dependence upon divine power. Amid the storms of temptation he could walk safely only as in utter self-distrust he should rely upon the Saviour. It was on the point where he thought himself strong that Peter was weak; and not until he discerned his weakness could he realize his need of dependence upon Christ. Had he learned the lesson that Jesus sought to teach him in that experience on the sea, he would not have failed when the great test came upon him.

Day by day God instructs His children. By the circumstances of the daily life He is preparing them to act their part upon that wider stage to which His providence has appointed them. It is the issue of the daily test that determines their victory or defeat in life's great crisis.

Those who fail to realize their constant dependence upon God will be overcome by temptation. We may now suppose that our feet stand secure, and that we shall never be moved. We may say with confidence, "I know in whom I have believed; nothing can shake my faith in God and in His word." . . . Only through realizing our own weakness and looking steadfastly unto Jesus can we walk securely.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 382.

Friday, July 29  
For Further Reading

*My Life Today*, “In Christ There Is Strength,” p. 316;

*Sons and Daughters of God*, “We Are to Labor With Love,” p. 268.