

Sabbath School Lesson #2 – The Genesis Foundation – 5-11 April 2025

Christ is the Lamb of God. “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Whosoever will believe and yield to Him may at last stand before the throne of God having had washed their robes from all sin and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Sunday: The Principle of “First Mention” – Read Isaiah 40:7-8; Malachi 3:6; and Hebrews 13:8. What principle can you derive from these texts that would help you properly anchor your study of prophecy? The principle therein is certainly not “first mention” that is given as a subtitle here by the Lesson writer. The principle in these texts is that man must be reconciled to God, and not God to man. The only object that Christ could have in coming to earth and dying for men, was the reconciliation of man to God, so that he might have life. “I am come that they might have life” (John 10:10). “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19). “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight” (Colossians 1:21-22). Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, “that He might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18). “If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10). But what about those who say that ‘the death of Christ reconciled God to man; that Christ died to satisfy God’s justice, to appease Him’? It is not that God needed to be reconciled to man. Stop a moment, and think what reconciliation means. The existence of enmity is the only necessity for reconciliation. Where there is no enmity, there is no necessity for reconciliation. Man is by nature alienated from God; he is a rebel, full of enmity. Therefore, man needs to be reconciled – to have his enmity taken away. But God has no enmity in His being. “God is love” (1 John 4:8). Consequently, there is no necessity for Him to be reconciled; there is no possibility of such a thing, for there can be no reconciliation where there has been no enmity. We read: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). They who say that the death of Christ reconciled God to men, have forgotten this blessed text. They would separate the Father and the Son, making the former the enemy, and the latter the friend, of man. But God’s heart was so overflowing with love to fallen man, that He “spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Romans 8:32); and in so doing He gave Himself, for “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.” Paul speaks of “the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). This effectually disposes of the idea that there was any enmity toward man on the part of God, so that He needed to be reconciled. The death of Christ was the expression of God’s wonderful love for sinners. Let us consider further what reconciliation means. It means a change on the part of the one reconciled. If one has enmity in His heart towards another, a radical change must take place in him before he is reconciled. This is the case with man. “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). But to speak of the necessity for God to be reconciled to man, is not only to say that He cherished enmity in His heart, but to say that God was partially in the wrong, and that a change had to take place in Him as well as in man. If it were not in the innocence of ignorance that men talked about God’s having been reconciled to men, it would be blasphemy. God is absolute and unchangeable perfection. Hear Him: “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed” (Malachi 3:6). Instead of having to change and be reconciled to sinful man, in order that they might be saved, the only hope for their salvation is the fact that He never changes, but is everlasting love. He is the source of life, and the standard of life. When any beings are unlike Him, the difference is on their part, and not on His. “He that cometh to God must believe that He is” (Hebrews 11:6). Why is it important we accept that man must be reconciled to God, and not God to man? Because in that alone is man’s hope. If God ever had any enmity in His heart against men, there would always arise the torturing thought, ‘perhaps He is not yet sufficiently appeased to accept me.’ But when we know that

God never had any enmity towards us, that He has loved us with an everlasting love, and that He has loved us so much that He gave Himself for us, that we might be reconciled to Him, we can joyfully exclaim, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

Monday: Understanding God's Love – Read Genesis 22:1-13. The first mention of "love" in the Bible is found in Genesis 22:2. What does this story teach us about the nature of God's love? Through Abraham and Isaac, we learn the love of the Father through His Son. Hebrews eleventh says of Abraham and all his posterity, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises" (verse 13), and still later, "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise" (verse 39). Yet in Hebrews 6:15, it is said of Abraham, "And so, after he had patiently endured, he received the promise." How is this? – it is easily reconciled, when we consider that, "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Isaac was the child of promise, born of the Spirit. His birth was life from the dead (Romans 4:19). So, when Abraham was tried, he offered up Isaac; "and he that received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Hebrews 11:17-19). Christ is the Seed, and He could come only through Isaac's line; yet so firmly did Abraham's faith grasp Christ as the One "who is, and who was, and who is to come" that he calmly proceeded to offer up Isaac, assured that the Christ who was to come from him was already alive from the dead, with power to raise Isaac from the dead so that the promise that He should be born of his line might be fulfilled. Truly Abraham had the promise, even as do a Christian who for a surety knows the promise of God that he shall be "heir of the world," already has tasted "the power of the world to come" (Hebrews 6:5).

Tuesday: Isaac's Question: Where Is the Lamb? – Read Genesis 22:7. What lesson does this text teach us? As both went to the mountain, Abraham was going to offer Isaac for a burnt offering to God, Abraham believed that "God was able to raise him up even from the dead" (Hebrews 11:19). Abraham believed in "God which quickeneth the dead" (Romans 4:17), and he knew that God who had given Isaac to him could bring him back again from the dead. When Isaac finally learnt that he was the offering that God had chosen, he might have refused to be offered, and could easily have escaped. But no: he had come all the way with perfect trust in his father, not knowing what was to be the end of the journey, and now that this was made known to him they still "went both of them together" (Genesis 22:8). So, freely Abraham offered his son to God, and freely Isaac gave his life, sharing his father's faith in God's promise. As Abraham "stretched forth the knife to slay his son," the Lord gave a ram to be offered instead. Thus, Abraham and Isaac returned home; what a joyful journey home the father and the son must have had! To Abraham it was just as though he had received Isaac again from the dead, and to Isaac as though he were newly risen, for the life that he had freely given up had been given to him again. Before this time God had "preached the Gospel unto Abraham;" but its lessons he could never have understood without this trial.

Wednesday: Dealing With Death – The first death was that of Abel. How did Adam deal with this grief? "Adam's life was one of sorrow, humility, and contrition. When he left Eden, the thought that he must die thrilled him with horror. He was first made acquainted with the reality of death in the human family when Cain, his first-born son, became the murderer of his brother. Filled with the keenest remorse for his own sin, and doubly bereaved in the death of Abel and the rejection of Cain, Adam was bowed down with anguish. He witnessed the wide-spreading corruption that was finally to cause the destruction of the world by a flood; and though the sentence of death pronounced upon him by his Maker had at first appeared terrible, yet after beholding for nearly a thousand years the results of sin, he felt that it was merciful in God to bring to an end a life of suffering and sorrow" {PP 82.2}.

Thursday: The Serpent – What lesson do we learn from how the serpent deceived Eve? Eve sinned by departing from the simplicity of the Word of God and that was manifested in the disobedient act of eating from the forbidden tree. "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). "Believe that Jesus means just what He says; take Him at His word, and hang your helpless soul upon Him" (RH, June 23, 1896). We must learn to hold firmly to the Word of our Creator and thus be kept from sinning.