

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2022: *Genesis*

Lesson 6 “The Roots of Abraham”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 12; Isaiah 48:20; Isaiah 36:6, 9; Jeremiah 2:18; Genesis 13; Genesis 14; Hebrews 7:1–10.

Memory Text

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Abraham’s Departure
- III. The Temptation of Egypt
- IV. Abram and Lot
- V. The Babel Coalition
- VI. The Tithe of Melchizedek
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. With the story of Abraham (Genesis 12-22) we have reached the structural and spiritual center of the book of Genesis. The structural center is Genesis 12:1-3. The three promises to Abram in chapter 12 build on the three relationships of Adam in Genesis 1 and the three consequences of the Fall. They also anticipate the fulfillment of those promises in the rest of the Pentateuch (five books of Moses). In Genesis, Abraham lives life without his past, which he has lost, and without his future, which he cannot see. He in many ways lives a life of frustration, one in which he never lives to see the fulfillment of God’s promises. That is the essence of faith. It is to trust God, based on sufficient evidence that He is trustworthy, even when you don’t know why or where He is taking you. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Genesis 12:1-9. Why do you think God called Abram to leave his country and his family? What are the spiritual benefits and challenges of completely uprooting yourself, leaving your home and family, and settling in a strange place alongside people you’ve never known before? Why do you think Abraham brought Lot along

with him? What do you make of the double “go” in Genesis 12:1 and 22:2? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Read Genesis 12:10-20. Why did Abram leave the Promised Land to go to Egypt? Why would Egypt be so tempting for an inhabitant of Canaan? Why would God place His people in a land so unfavorable for agricultural success? In a comparison between Abraham and Pharaoh, who comes out looking more like God? What was Abraham’s problem in all of this? What does the recording of Abraham’s weaknesses and failures tell us about God? (Monday’s Lesson)
4. Read Genesis 13:1-18. What do you think would have happened if Lot had chosen the hill country instead? Would Abram have generously settled for Sodom? What does this story teach us about the importance of character? How is it possible to be generous with others when they are not generous with us? Why does God wait until Abram and Lot have separated before He speaks to Abram again? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
5. Read Genesis 14:1-16. What is significant about this war taking place just after Abram is given the gift of the Promised Land? Was it an intrusion on God’s plans for Abram or part of his training for mission? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
6. Read Genesis 14:17-24 and Hebrews 7:1-10. Who was this Melchizedek? Why do you think Abram paid tithes to this priest who seems to appear out of nowhere? Wasn’t Abram supposed to bless the nations? How is it that this foreign king is allowed to bless Abram? What do you make of the phrase “Most High God”? What does the book of Hebrews add to this unusual story? What is the relationship between paying tithe and faith? (Thursday’s Lesson)
7. What is your understanding of the meaning of “blessing”? In what way can we be a “blessing” to others? (Friday’s Lesson)
8. Which do you think is worse, outright falsehood or telling the truth in a way that misleads? (Friday’s Lesson)
9. There is a tension between avoiding contact in order to stay pure and seeking contact for the sake of mission. How does one navigate that tension within the Christian life?
10. What part of your life might you have to abandon in order to heed the call of God? Do you sense God calling you to do or be something different five or ten years from now?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But everything depends on the faith and the trust. So he’s making the same point here. We all want to be children of Abraham, the friend of God. And what marked him as God’s friend? He really trusted God, and he showed it was genuine trust when God asked him to take his son and do something, or to leave Ur of the Chaldees. He did something. He was constantly listening

and obeying God, because he loved and trusted God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Galatians, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>

Further Study with Ellen White

It was for the purpose of bringing the best gifts of Heaven to all the peoples of earth that God called Abraham out from his idolatrous kindred and bade him dwell in the land of Canaan. “I will make of thee a great nation,” He said, “and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.” Genesis 12:2. . . . {PK 15.1}

Men had well-nigh lost the knowledge of the true God. Their minds were darkened by idolatry. For the divine statutes, which are “holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12), men were endeavoring to substitute laws in harmony with the purposes of their own cruel, selfish hearts. Yet God in His mercy did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church. He designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring the moral image of God in man. {PK 15.2}

God did not design that His people should build up a wall of partition between themselves and their fellow men. The heart of Infinite Love was reaching out toward all the inhabitants of the earth. Though they had rejected Him, He was constantly seeking to reveal Himself to them and make them partakers of His love and grace. His blessing was granted to the chosen people, that they might bless others. {PP 368.1}

When the Lord chose Abraham, it was not simply to be the special friend of God, but to be a medium of the peculiar privileges the Lord desired to bestow upon the nations. {PK 231.4}

God is not dependent upon men for the advancement of His cause. He might have made angels the ambassadors of His truth. He might have made known His will, as He proclaimed the law from Sinai with His own voice. But in order to cultivate a spirit of benevolence in us, He has chosen to employ men to do this work. {CS 20.1}

The gospel invitation is not to be narrowed down and presented only to a select few, who, we suppose, will do us honor if they accept it. The message is to be given to all. When God blesses His children, it is not alone for their own sake, but for the world’s sake. As He bestows His gifts on us, it is that we may multiply them by imparting. {MH 102.1}

Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of the gifts of heaven, and to exclude the rest of God’s family in the world. But Christ came to break down every wall of partition. He came to

show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth. {RC 27.2}

The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God. No question of policy influenced His movements. He made no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. That which appealed to His heart was a soul thirsting for the waters of life. {RC 27.3}

Through His Son, God has revealed the excellency to which man is capable of attaining. And before the world God is developing us as living witnesses of what man may become through the grace of Christ. {OHC 108.2}

In the divine arrangement God does nothing without the cooperation of man. He compels no man's will. That must be given to the Lord completely, else the Lord is not able to accomplish His divine work that He would do through the human agency. Jesus declared that in a certain place He could not do many mighty works among the people because of their unbelief. He wanted to do for them in that place just what He knew that they needed to have done, but He could not because unbelief barred the way. The potter cannot mold and fashion unto honor that which has never been placed in his hands. The Christian life is one of daily surrender, submission, and continual overcoming, gaining fresh victories every day. This is the growing up into Christ, fashioning the life into the divine Model. . . . {TMK 55.4}

When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit. {FW 50.1}

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence. {GC 555.1}

Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine. {COL 312.2}

In the visible creation, divine wisdom is manifested in an endless variety of processes. Uniformity is not the rule that is followed in the kingdom of nature. Neither is it the rule that is

followed in the kingdom of grace. In different ways God works to attain one purpose—the saving of souls. By different methods the gracious Redeemer deals with different minds. The change of heart is as truly wrought out by one process as by another. It is the Lord working upon minds and molding characters. {TDG 67.2}

All are not led to the Lord in precisely the same way. Human beings are not to define, arbitrarily and narrowly, the characteristics of God’s working on minds. It may be given to one to gain spiritual strength and discernment easily, while another has to contend with “a thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7), and at times is ready, apparently, to step off the heights over the precipice. Yet who dare say that God does not still love and regard as His child the one so sorely beset, and that His hand is not still stretched out to save? {TDG 67.3}

Righteous words and deeds have a more powerful influence for good than all the sermons that can be preached.—ML 114. {VSS 52.1}

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, *Let your light shine*. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord’s glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence. {COL 420.1}

When the grace of God reigns within, the soul will be surrounded with an atmosphere of faith and courage and Christlike love, an atmosphere invigorating to the spiritual life of all who inhale it. . . . Those who are humble in heart the Lord will use to reach souls whom the ordained ministers cannot approach. They will be moved to speak words which reveal the saving grace of Christ. {AG 238.5}

And in blessing others they will themselves be blessed. God gives us the opportunity to impart grace, that He may refill us with increased grace. Hope and faith will strengthen as the agent for God works with the talents and facilities that God has provided. He will have a divine agency to work with him. {AG 238.6}