

Sabbath School Lesson #6 – The Roots of Abraham – 30 April-6 May 2022

Christ would have us be like Abraham, the “father of the faithful,” who was sent out, “not knowing whither he went,” who went simply because God called him away. He did not care where he went, so long as God was with him. God said of him that he and his children “were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” He might have returned into the country out of which he came, we are told, if he had desired to do it; but he and those who had his faith testified that they were seeking, “a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

Sunday: Abram’s Departure – What was the environment where Abram lived? “Now the Lord had said unto Abram” (Genesis 12:1). Abram was a native of Ur of the Chaldees, not far from the mouth of the river Euphrates. Uruk was king of Ur. Uruk is supposed to have lived about a hundred years, or perhaps a little more, before Abram left Ur. Terah was Abram’s father and an idolater, for he “served other gods” (Joshua 24:2). These gods were mostly the sun, the moon, and the planets. Sin, or Hurki, was the moon-god; San, or Sansi, was the sun; Vul was the god of the atmosphere; Nin was Saturn; Merodach was Jupiter; Nergal was Mars; Ishtar was Venus; and Nebo was Mercury. With each of these and in his worship was associated a female divinity. Ana was the god of the lower world, the lord of darkness or death. The chief seat of his worship was Erech (Genesis 10:10). The principal temple at Erech was built by Uruk to Sin, the moon-god. He also built temples to the sun to Belus and his wife Beltis, as well as to many others, for he was a mighty builder and a devout worshiper of the gods. It was in such a place, amidst such idolatry, that Abram was born and grew up, his own people and even his own father serving those gods. Yet Abram turned from it all and served Jehovah. When all about him had forsaken the true God and served idols and walked in their evil ways, Abram stood faithful to the Lord. It was from the midst of this idolatry that God called Abram to go out into a land which He would show him.

Monday: The Temptation of Egypt – Read Genesis 12:10-20. Why did Abram leave the Promised Land to go to Egypt? How did the pharaoh behave in comparison to Abram? We read the answers from the Spirit of Prophecy as follows: “In Egypt, Abraham gave evidence that he was not free from human weakness. Sarah was ‘fair to look upon,’ and he doubted not that the Egyptians would covet the beautiful stranger and slay her husband. He reasoned that he was not guilty of falsehood in representing Sarah as his sister, for she was the daughter of his father, though not of his mother” {EP 77.4}. “But this was deception. Through Abraham’s lack of faith, Sarah was placed in great peril. The king of Egypt caused her to be taken to his palace, intending to make her his wife. But the Lord, in His great mercy, protected Sarah by sending judgment upon the royal household. By this means the monarch learned the deception practiced upon him. He reprovved Abraham, saying, “What is this that thou hast done unto me? ... Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.” {EP 78.1}. “Pharaoh’s dismissal of Abraham was kind and generous, but he bade him leave Egypt. He had ignorantly been about to do him a serious injury, but God had saved the monarch from committing so great a sin. Pharaoh saw in this stranger a man whom God honored. Should Abraham remain in Egypt, his increasing wealth and honor would likely excite the envy or covetousness of the Egyptians, and some injury might be done him which might again bring judgments upon the royal house” {EP 78.2}. “The matter could not be kept secret, and it was seen that the God whom Abraham worshiped would protect His servant and that any injury done him would be avenged. It is a dangerous thing to wrong one of the children of the King of heaven. The psalmist says that God ‘reprovved kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm.’ Psalm 105:14,15” – Ellen White {EP 78.3}.

Tuesday: Abram and Lot – Read Genesis 13:1-18. “Abraham returned to Canaan ‘very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold.’ Lot was with him, and they came to Bethel and pitched their tents. In the midst of hardships and trials they had dwelt together in harmony, but in their prosperity there was danger of strife. The pasturage was not sufficient for the flocks and herds of both. It was evident that they must separate” {EP 79.1}. “Abraham was the first to propose plans for preserving peace. Although the whole land had been given him by God

Himself, he courteously waived this right. 'Let there be no strife,' he said, 'between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.'" {EP 79.2}. "How many under similar circumstances would cling to their individual rights and preferences! How many households, how many churches have been divided, making the cause of truth a byword and a reproach among the wicked! The children of God the world over are one family, and the same spirit of love and conciliation should govern them. 'Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.' Romans 12:10. A willingness to do to others as we would wish them to do to us would annihilate half the ills of life. The heart in which the love of Christ is cherished will possess that charity which 'seeketh not her own.' Philippians 2:4" {EP 79.3}. "Lot manifested no gratitude to his benefactor. Instead, he selfishly endeavored to grasp advantages. He 'lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, ... even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt.' The most fertile region in all Palestine was the Jordan valley, reminding the beholders of the lost Paradise and equaling the beauty and productiveness of the Nile-enriched plains they had left. There were cities, wealthy and beautiful, inviting to profitable traffic. Dazzled with visions of worldly gain, Lot overlooked the moral evils encountered there. He 'chose him all the plain of Jordan' and 'pitched his tent toward Sodom.' How little did he foresee the terrible results of that selfish choice" {EP 80.1}.

Wednesday: The Babel Coalition – Read Genesis 14:1-17. Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, because he had much cattle, and the country furnished rich pasture. He grew exceedingly rich. But then Chedorlaomer and the allied kings made war upon Sodom, and took both Lot and all that he had. Abraham remained in the plain of Mamre, dwelling in tents, and God gave him peace with all mankind. Surely it was better to be Abraham in the country than Lot in the city. But although Abraham was a man of peace, he could fight when it was necessary. Taking three hundred and eighteen of his servants he pursued the enemy, and brought back Lot and his family, and everything that had been taken from Sodom. We must not understand that Abraham's servants comprised the whole of the army, for we learn that Amer and Eshcol were confederate with him, and accompanied him on the expedition. Doubtless each of these had a large number of followers. It was not a small thing for Abraham to conquer Chedorlaomer and his confederate kings. The seat of Chedorlaomer's kingdom was beyond the Euphrates and extensive when even Sodom was subject to him.

Thursday: The Tithe of Melchizedek – We find the story of Melchizedek in Genesis 14. Hebrews 7 repeats the story of Genesis 14, and makes some comments upon it. Besides this we find reference to Melchizedek in Hebrews 5, 6 and Psalms 110:4. Who was Melchizedek? He was "king of Salem" (Genesis 14:18) and "priest of the most high God" (Hebrews 7:1-2). That he was a type of Christ is stated in Psalms and in Hebrews: Christ is a high priest "after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalms 110:4; Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:17). Melchizedek was both king and priest. Christ combines the kingly and the priestly office in one person. Melchizedek was a type of Christ and was like Him: "made like unto the Son of God" (Hebrews 7:3). His name signifies "king of righteousness," and Salem, of which he was king of, means "peace," so that he was not only priest, but king of righteousness and king of peace. So of Christ it is said, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." And the name whereby He shall be called is "The Lord our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6). And when Abraham saw Melchizedek, he saw a type of Christ. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed." And Christ tells us, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad." Where in Hebrews 7:3 it says Melchizedek had not mother or father, people take that to mean he was not of a father. Reading from other Bible versions, this simply means his genealogy is not revealed to us. Some misapply the verse, and they infer that Christ also had no origin. Even if we accept that Melchizedek had no father, it cannot apply to Christ, for Christ says God was His Father. In Matthew, we find the genealogy of Jesus. It shows how important genealogies were. But we are simply not give the genealogy of Melchizedek.