God's Grand, Christ-Centered Plan

Lesson 2, 3rd Quarter July 1-7, 2025.

Sabbath Afternoon - July 1

Memory Text:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:" KJV — Ephesians 1:3

"What is there left for us to ask that is not included in this merciful, abundant provision? Through the merits of Christ we are endowed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. It is our privilege to draw nigh to God, to breathe in the atmosphere of heaven, to grow as we keep ourselves in close union with the common, cheap, manual things of this earth. Satan will intercepe his shadow, so that we shall fail to discern the blessedness of the promises and assurances of God, and so shall fail to be strengthened to attain to a high spiritual standard. Nothing short of abiding in the presence of Christ will bring peace, freedom, courage, and power. Rht September 6, 1892, par. 2.

"The great apostle Paul spoke from a heart full of love because in Ephesians there were souls who had accepted Christ as the Saviour... This is the treasure that God has commissioned his servants to bear." Rev July 19, 1898, par. 23

Sunday - July 2

Chosen and accepted in Christ

What does the phrase "in the heavenly places" mean in Ephesians (the only place it is used in the New Testament)?

"The plan of redemption was arranged in the councils between the Father and the Son. Then Christ pledged himself to remain as a hostage for us in the proved dislopal. He pledged himself to make an atonement which would unite every believing soul to God. He who lay his sins upon the substitute and surety, thus becoming a partaker of the divine nature, could see the Father in heaven saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." In his infinite love Christ devised the plan of salvation. It was his own work, he was in the behalf of all who will co-operate with him. In their behalf he pleaded, in their behalf he suffered and died, but lay them on me. Be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities remember no more. They have accepted my merits, and made peace with me; and they shall make peace with me. They are my possession, my theirs, and for my sake bless them with all spiritual blessings." Rh May 12, 1908, par. 12

"The ladder which Jacob saw in the night vision, the base of it resting upon the earth and the topmost round reaching unto the highest heavens; God himself above the ladder, and his glory shining upon every round, angels ascending and descending upon this ladder of shining ladder, represented the plan of constant communication kept up between this world and heavenly places. God accomplishes his will through the instrumentality of heavenly angels in continual intercourse with humanity. Thus Jacob was made to see that there is a constant communication with the inhabitants of this earth..." CE 35.3

Monday - July 3

Costly Redemption; Lavish Forgiveness

"Redemption" is an idea that is used frequently in the New Testament. Compare the uses of the idea in Colossians 1:13, 14; Titus 2:14; and Hebrews 9:15. What themes do these passages share in common with Ephesians 1:7, 8.

"Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see the beauty of truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan. Christ offers to release the soul following the dictates of his own judgment, he sleeps in the prison of sin, and Satan holds the keys and the bolts and shackles of sin-slavery from the soul. 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' It is the work of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' sets us 'free from the law of sin and death.' Rev Mar 11, 1897, par. 3

"In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when he yields to the surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The emancipation of a soul is the work of God itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be free, God has made it our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. Ch 440.4

"The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. 'The truth shall make you free.' and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by embedding the mind, and destroying the moral image of God in the soul. Subjection to sin, even to one's self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is "the law of liberty." James 2:12." CE 40.4

Tuesday - July 4

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What is God's "plan for the fullness of time," and how extensive is its reach? Eph. 1:9, 10.

"God needs men and women who will work in the simplicity of Christ to bring the knowledge of truth before those who were in darkness. The great plan revealed in Christ's righteousness must be proclaimed from one end of the earth to the other. Our people are to be aroused to prepare the way of the Lord. The third angel's message—the last message of mercy to a perishing world—is no sacred, so glorious. Let the truth go forth as a lamp that burneth. Let the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shine forth in its brightness. Let the world, which knoweth not God, know, the church of God is to make known. Rh April 22, 1909, par. 16

"Christ's wonderful sacrifice for the world testifies to the fact that man may be rescued from iniquity. If he will break with Satan, and unite with his son, there is hope for him. Man, sinful, blinded, wretched, may repent and be pardoned. He may be clothed with the robe of the righteous character of Christ. Human beings may be reclaimed, redeemed, and may learn to do before the world precious, Christlike lives. Rh April 22, 1909, par. 17

"God has "made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of the times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him..." Rh April 22, 1909, par. 18

"The word of truth, Bible truth, present truth, is to be promulgated widely, boldly, in the demonstration of the power of God, for the purpose of making impressions upon the minds of those who are in a state of spiritual death, that we believe, yet were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." 2TMR 51.3

Wednesday - July 5

Living in Praise of His Glory

Compare the uses of the idea of "inheritance" in Ephesians 1:11, 14, 18. Why do you think this idea is important to Paul?

"The instruction God gave His apostles, He gave for the benefit of the church in these last days. Christ has prophesied Christians reach the high standard which is their privilege to attain, the simplicity of faith will be maintained in all their worship. Forms and ceremonies and musical accomplishments are not the strength of the church. Yet these things have taken the place that God ordained should be occupied by the power of godliness. The Lord has revealed to me that when the heart is cleansed and sanctified, the spirit of worship will be church are partakers of the divine nature, a power will go forth from the church that will cause melody in the heart." 14LtMs, Ms 157,

"I have been deeply impressed that we are not as a people growing in faith and trust and confidence in God and joyousness in the Lord. We would praise the Lord most earnestly if we realized the exceeding sinfulness of our sins. We would more readily appreciate the Saviour's love if we realized the willingness of our Father to receive us if we so largely at disposal of the Lord, and the glorious gospel of righteousness should everywhere prevail..." 15LtMs, Ms 93, 1900, par. 7

"God fives no limit to the advancement of those who desire to be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Through prayer, through watchfulness, through growth in knowledge and understanding, they are to be "strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power." Thus they are prepared to work for others. It is the Saviour's purpose that human beings, purified and sanctified, shall be His helpers. For this great privilege let us give thanks to Him who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. We have inherited sin from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." Ax 478.2

Thursday - July 6

The Holy Spirit: Seal and Down Payment

In Ephesians 1:13, 14 Paul tells a brief the conversion story of his readers. What are the steps in that story?

What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the forehands of the saints? It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read; for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption. Letter 24, 1896, 4BC 1147.4

The angel with the writer's ink horn is to place a mark upon the forehands of all who are separated from sin and sinners, and the destroying angel follows this angel Letter 12, 1886; 4BC 1145.5

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads in a set and unchangeable form of truth, but a setting into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, the enemies will be made to pass over them, not slay them. It is equivalent to the blood on the door post on the night of the Passover in Egypt. The angel is to place a mark upon the forehands of all who by sighing over their own sins, and over the sins in the house of God, show fealty to the Truth. Then the destroying angels will follow, to slay utterly both old and young who have failed to receive the seal. (See Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 505.)

So, the former seal enables the receiver to rise from the dead in the resurrection of life first; while the latter seal enables the sighing-crying one to escape death and forever to live for God.

Friday - July 7

Further Thought

"The predestination of which God speaks includes all who will accept Christ as a personal Saviour, who will return to their loyalty to God and obedience to His commandments. This is the effectual salvation of a peculiar people, chosen by God in Christ before time, all who are willing to be saved by Christ are the elect of God. It is the obedient who are predestinated from the foundation of the world." 2TMR 51.2

"Before the foundation of the earth were laid, the covenant was made that all who were obedient, all who should, through the abundant grace provided, become holy in character, and without blame before God, by accepting the righteousness of Christ, should be saved. This covenant, made from eternity, was given to Abraham hundreds of years afterwards. Christ is the mediator and what eternity did Christ in humanity study the human nature to see if they would avail themselves of the provision offered." 5pTEd 178.1