

## Backgrounds and Characters in the Old Testament L1 4Q 2010

### Story and History

#### SABBATH

Read memory text, “Every Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work.”

Thoughts about this passage? Is it true? I have with me the Bible that was given to me in the US Army, let me read from Maccabees, Tobit, Susana, or I also have the book of Mormon would we want to use it this morning? But isn't all Scripture inspired by God?

Why are we not comfortable with this? Is the Scripture correct? The translation is not. The American Standard Version is more accurate:

Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.

Do you notice the difference? Is every scripture inspired by God? But those that are inspired are useful for teaching etc.

Is the entire Bible inspired by God? What does it mean? Does that mean any verse in Scripture represents a truth from God?

What do we mean when we say the Bible is inspired? Are the words of scripture inspired? Or are the ideas represented by the words inspired? Is the Bible an expression of God's thoughts or men's thoughts?

The Bible is written by inspired men, but **it is not God's mode of thought and expression**. It is that of humanity. **God, as a writer, is not represented**. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. **But God has not put Himself**

**in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible.** The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers. {1SM 21.1}

**It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself,** who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. **But the words receive the impress of the individual mind.** The divine mind is diffused. **The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind** and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.--

Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886). {1SM 21.2}

Thoughts? Do you agree? What difference does it make to you to realize the Bible is written by inspired men who expressed the ideas with their language, phrases, expressions?

Should we then over emphasize certain words chosen by the Bible writers? Or should we instead focus on the theme, meaning or general point?

Have you always understood inspiration this way? What danger exists in misunderstanding the meaning of Bible inspiration? Might the idea the Bible is inspired lead some to believe they are not to question or think about what the Bible says?

What is the primary purpose of Scripture? Is it a code book of how to live, what to do and not to do?

The primary purpose of Scripture is to reveal God to man – it is a weapon, a sword, a light in the darkness of misunderstanding about God. It is provided to elevate and ennoble our minds.

**We should not take the testimony of any man as to what the Scriptures teach,** but should study the word of God ourselves. **If we allow others to do our thinking, we shall have crippled energies and contracted abilities.** The noble powers of the mind may be so dwarfed by lack of exercise on themes worthy of their concentration as to lose their ability to

grasp the deep meaning of the word of God. **The mind will enlarge if it is employed in tracing out the subjects of the Bible**, comparing scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual. **There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures.** No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. **If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose that is rarely seen in these times.** {CE 58.1}

Thoughts? What do you hear?

The lesson points out that the Bible is filled with stories – when we form our doctrines, do we typically use the stories or the “proof” texts? Has it ever seemed like the stories are for the children, while the proof texts are for the adults? Could it be the opposite? Could the stories be for the spiritual adults while the exhortations and instructions are for the children?

Who needed the written law, the ceremonial law, the ordinances – the mature or the children? Who needed the instructions to treat their wives like Christ treats the church, the spiritual mature or the immature?

Have we missed something by relegating the stories to the children?

Why are the stories so important? Are the stories in the Bible there for us to primarily learn about the individual characters? The stories are where we see God in action, where we see what “God is love” looks like in real life. We see how God acts and behaves and treats people and we learn of Him.

SUNDAY

Read top paragraph, “Plot is defined...” thoughts? What is the plot of the Bible?

In its wide range of style and subjects, the Bible has something to interest every mind and appeal to every heart. In its pages are found history the most ancient; biography the truest to life; principles of government for the control of the state, for the regulation of the household--principles that human wisdom has never equaled. It contains philosophy the most profound; poetry the sweetest and the most sublime, the most impassioned and the most pathetic. **Immeasurably superior in value to the productions of any human author are the Bible writings, even when thus considered; but of infinitely wider scope, of infinitely greater value, are they when viewed in their relation to the grand central thought.** Viewed in the light of this thought, every topic has a new significance. In the most simply stated truths are involved principles that are as high as heaven and that compass eternity. {CG 505.1}

What is the grand central thought or theme of scripture? What are the principles involved?

The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its **grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation.** He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. {Ed 190.2}

What do you hear as the plot? What is the grand central theme? How would you describe it? What are the two antagonistic principles? How do they enter every phase of our existence? How has Satan infiltrated his system into Christian thinking?

What is the basis of Satan's system? Selfishness – my way or die.  
What are Satan's methods, how does he work?

How did Satan approach the angels in heaven? How did he approach Adam and Eve? How did he approach Jesus in the wilderness?

- He approached them gently, kindly, subtly, softly, to convert them to his way of thinking – the angels and man were converted – But what happens when one isn't converted?
- Jesus didn't listen and what did Satan do? Resorted to coercive pressure, brought authority to bear and when that didn't work? Execution, kill those who don't agree with him.
- What about the beast system of the Dark Ages? What methods did it employ? Send missionaries to do good works and convert, but if conversion didn't happen then what? Coercion, no one buys or sells, and if coercion didn't work, then what? Execution!
- What method does the penal model of salvation say God uses? He sends His blessing and missionaries, including His Son, revealing truth to convert. If that doesn't work He sends coercive pressure and if that doesn't work and we don't accept Jesus then He will torture and kill us in the end. Do you see this presentation, this distorted idea about God has infiltrated Christian thought and is preparing the world for the great deception. It is our mission to reveal the truth about God to counter such misconceptions and prepare minds to meet Jesus.

The lesson asks us to consider the story of Job and asks us to identify the two plots in the story and suggests in Scripture there is never one plot but two. Thoughts?

I like the lesson's focus on moving our thinking away from just what we see here and now to an eternal reality behind the scenes, don't you?

EGW talks about two antagonistic principles which enter every phase of human experience – can we see those in the story of Job?

What are those two antagonistic principles? How are they related to the grand central theme?

Do you see in Job's story the same thing, subtly, then coercive pressure?

Read bottom green, "What is your plot? What kind of character are you?" While each of our stories are unique, do we each have the exact same antagonistic principles at war in our lives?

## MONDAY

The lesson asks us to consider David when he was alone in the cave with Saul, who was seeking to kill him; and Joseph when propositioned by Potipher's wife. Do you see the same two antagonistic principles? Do you see the serpent's methods – subtly followed by coercive pressure?

The lesson asks us to consider the setting – what was the setting for David? What was the setting for Joseph?

Was David's true setting a cave or Joseph's a room in Egypt? Or is there a grander reality in which to "set" the "setting"? Do you think David and Joseph remembered the grand setting?

What was Joseph's response? "How can I commit this sin against God?" notice his perspective, what setting was he in?

Satan wants obstruct our ability to see our true setting and cause us to consider our setting as what he can construe around us.

What is our true setting? Does it make a difference to see things in this light?

Read last paragraph, "But setting is not..." thoughts?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts? Why do you think David and Joseph responded as they did?

What are the two antagonist principles vying for our hearts? Love versus selfishness – what motivates selfishness – is it not fear for what will happen to self? If David was thinking about himself what would he have done? If Joseph was thinking about himself what would he have done? When we think about self first how do we live and act? Do these stories show a better way?

## TUESDAY

Read bottom paragraph, “When we lose the big...” thoughts? Do we as a modern people, as a modern church, struggle with losing our focus on what God has called us to accomplish? Do we ever make minors into majors?

What has God called this church to accomplish? Do we expect to live victoriously – lives that love rather than are controlled by fear and doubt? Do we expect to experience peace with God and peace within, in the face of a world in conflict?

What are we to witness to the world? What is the final message of mercy? How are we to present it? Does it have anything to do with our own hearts, minds and characters being healed and restored?

Where does God’s law fit in? How do we take the “major” message of the end time and make it a “minor” point? What about the Sabbath? Is the final conflict merely over which day we worship upon? Is it simply over whether we recognize Saturday versus Sunday? No! such focus turns things to a “minor” point and misses the major point.

The final conflict coming upon the world is between the two antagonistic powers – between God’s law and Satan’s law. God’s law of love versus Satan’s law of survival of the fittest.

The Sabbath is involved in that it embodies all of God’s law, truth, love, freedom. But the point in the end will be on what law do you live – will you love others more than self, will you love the truth and will you respect the freedom of others.

The beast system will be selfish, will lie and will coerce others. It is about the character of God versus the character of Satan, whose character are you developing?

### WEDNESDAY

Asks us to read 1Samuel 8:7-20:

And the LORD told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. <sup>8</sup> As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. <sup>9</sup> Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.”

<sup>10</sup> Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. <sup>11</sup> He said, “This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. <sup>12</sup> Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. <sup>13</sup> He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. <sup>14</sup> He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. <sup>15</sup> He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. <sup>16</sup> Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle<sup>b</sup> and donkeys he will take for his own use. <sup>17</sup> He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. <sup>18</sup> When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the LORD will not answer you in that day.”

<sup>19</sup> But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. <sup>20</sup> Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

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<sup>b</sup>Septuagint; Hebrew *young men*

<sup>21</sup> When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. <sup>22</sup> The LORD answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.”

Thoughts? What do you hear? What lessons? Why did they get kings? Did God want them to have kings? When they asked for kings what did God do? And after His warnings what then? When they insisted on having kings what did God say? What tone do you think was in God’s voice?

This is a story – it doesn’t have a proof text, but what do we learn about God from this story? Do we see a God who wants to protect His children from harm, a God who wants to provide for them and not have them exploited? Do we see a God who warns and extols? Do we see a God who will respect the choice of His creatures and let them go?

Does this apply to how God treats the wicked and unrepentant? This is exactly what God does – listen:

**I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way: They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproves, and points out the only path of safety;** then, if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, **if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.** {LDE 242.1}

**It is Satan's power** that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey.--14MR 3 (1883). {LDE 242.2}

**God will use His enemies as instruments to punish** those who have followed their own pernicious ways whereby the truth of God has been misrepresented, misjudged, and dishonored.--PC 136 (1894). {LDE 242.3}

**Already the Spirit of God, insulted, refused, abused, is being withdrawn from the earth. Just as fast as God's**

**Spirit is taken away, Satan's cruel work will be done upon land and sea.**--Ms 134, 1898. {LDE 242.4}

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Describes the fall of Israel in 722 B.C. to the Assyrians and Judah to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. why? Why did these nations fall?

What do we learn from their stories? What do we see God doing during this time?

He sent prophets with messages, what kind of messages?

The city of murderers is doomed! I myself will pile up the firewood. Bring more wood! Fan the flames! Cook the meat! Boil away the broth! Burn up the bones! Now set the empty bronze pot on the coals and let it get red-hot....You will not be pure again until you have felt the full force of my anger. I, the Lord, have spoken. The time has come for me to act. (Ezekiel 24:2,9-14).

Now many theologians will read passages just like this and then preach that God will get you if you don't do what He says. But, what did God actually do to ancient Israel and Judah? He let them go! He surrendered them! He abandoned them to their own choice! It was the Babylonians, not God that came and took them away, because they no longer would let Him protect them!

Do you see the kind of trouble we can get into when we forget the stories and only remember the words God spoke?

FRIDAY

Second paragraph states, "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teachings in our past history." Have we ever forgotten how the Lord has led and His past teachings?

Read and discuss questions 1-4