



## 2018 Q1 Lesson 5- Stewards After Eden

Presented by Russell Atkins

### SABBATH

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On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 2:4, NIV).

What was Adam’s command for stewardship *before* the fall? What was his task or job? What were he and Eve entrusted with? Why was man[kind] created, in the first place? Was God bored with the company of Angels, and need some other friends? What was the state of the rest of Creation at the time of Earth’s formation?

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” <sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup> Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and **subdue** it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Gen. 1: 26-28.

What needed subduing? Wasn’t the Earth created perfect?

<sup>15</sup> Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

<sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Gen. 2:15-17.

“Every good thing of earth was placed here by the bountiful hand of God as an expression of His love to man. The poor are His, and the cause of religion is His. The gold and the silver are the Lord’s; and He could rain them from heaven if He chose. **But instead of this He has made man His steward, entrusting him with means, not to be hoarded, but to be used in benefiting others. He thus makes man the medium through which to distribute His blessings on earth. God planned the system of beneficence, in order that man might become like his Creator, benevolent and unselfish in character, and finally be a partaker with Christ of the eternal, glorious reward.**” {CS 15.2} Emphasis mine.

What law is she describing?

From the Lesson:

“What is stewardship? Certain Bible characters reveal what a steward is by how they lived. Other scriptures define it more clearly. When we become God’s stewards, our focus on the



world and its materialistic values changes to a **focus on the Creator and His mission**. As with Adam and Eve, God entrusts to us responsibilities of divine origin. Since the Fall in Eden, however, the task of stewardship has changed; along with the responsibilities of caring for the material world, we are also entrusted to be good stewards of spiritual truths.” *Emphasis mine*.

## SUNDAY

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### Stewards in the Old Testament

Qualities of a steward: Trustworthiness, Self governance, patience, hospitality, sensibility, temperance, teachable, any others?

Who comes to mind when you hear “stewards in the Old Testament”? Adam, Seth, Noah, Mechizedek, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, every OT prophet, any others?

**What were they stewards of?** Was this any different than Adam & Eve?

From the lesson:

“Some characteristics of a steward are made clear in the Old Testament. First, the position of a steward was one of great responsibility (Gen. 39:4). Stewards were chosen because of their abilities, and they received respect and trust from their owners for getting the job done. Second, stewards knew that what had been entrusted to them belonged to their owner (Gen. 24:34–38). This is the supreme difference between a steward and an owner. Stewards understand their position. Third, when stewards took for their own use what had been entrusted to them, the relationship of trust between them and the owner was broken, and the stewards were dismissed” (Gen. 3:23, Hos. 6:7).

“Dismissed” or Let Go?

## MONDAY

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### Stewards in the New Testament

Based on the definition of a steward in yesterday’s lesson, name the stewards that come to mind in the New Testament. Jesus of Nazareth, Judas, Steven, Saul/Paul, Peter, John, -- any others?

What was Jesus a steward of? Everything that’s been made was made by and through Him. [see John 1: 3]

How could he be a steward of His own? Does this give us any hints as to the true meaning of the term “steward”? He told some parables about stewards [some faithful, some not so much] – Any insights we can gather from those?



## TUESDAY

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### Stewards of the Mysteries of God

According to Paul [in Colossians 2 & 1 Timothy 3], Jesus of Nazareth is the “mystery of God”. According to Jesus of Nazareth, God is exactly like Jesus [Entire gospel of John].

Is there some circular reasoning here, or something else? How could God being JUST like Jesus be considered a mystery?

Consider some of the “gods” Israel sought after during the “Kings” era. What were their primary attributes?

From the lesson:

“The mysteries of God have been recorded in Scripture, even though understanding them fully is still beyond our comprehension. *That’s why they are mysteries.*”

Did God have Scripture recorded simply as a “mystery”? Unable to be comprehended? Or did He inspire men to record Scripture precisely *to be comprehended*? While an Infinite God will never be fully comprehended by finite beings, does this mean we should suspend our reason/judgement and never try?

## WEDNESDAY

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### Stewards of Spiritual Truth

Nearly 34,000 different sects of Christianity consider themselves “Stewards of Spiritual Truth”. Are they? Can they?

Ephesians 6: 13-17 is a familiar passage referring to girding loins with Truth, Breastplates of Righteousness, Shoes of the Gospel of Peace, Shields of Faith, and Helmets of Salvation. We don’t read the preceding verses very well, and thus we often forget the nature of the warfare.

<sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Eph. 6: 11-16.

The lesson suggests we are to be stewards of “redemption”. I couldn’t agree more. How are we to be stewards of redemption?



From the lesson:

“Only in the light that shines from Calvary can nature’s teaching be read aright. Through the story of Bethlehem and the cross let it be shown how good is to conquer evil, and how every blessing that comes to us is a gift of redemption.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 101.

*Redemption is ours only because Jesus paid the ultimate price.* Paul clearly states, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7, NKJV). Emphasis mine.

I’m not sure how the author/editor gets “Jesus paid the ultimate price” from Paul’s text in Ephesians.

## **THURSDAY**

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### **Our Responsibility as Stewards**

This part of the lesson stresses personal responsibilities, the relationship between cause and effect, and [“the difficult question of”] freewill.

If one believes God’s law to be imperial / imposed in nature, then these concepts get very murky, however, if one understands God’s Law to be design law – the protocols upon which all life is built, then they become more clear.

Any thoughts as to how Adam & Eve bore their personal responsibilities before the fall?

Scripture is quite clear on how they behaved afterward –“It was that serpent you made...” It’s God’s fault. “It was that woman that you gave me...” It’s God’s fault.