

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*
Lesson 1 “God’s Mission to Us: Part 1”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 3:9–15; Genesis 28:15; Exodus 29:43, 45; Matthew 1:18–23; John 1:14–18; John 3:16; John 14:1–3.

Memory Text

“Then the LORD God called Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’” (Genesis 3:9, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The God Who Reaches Out to Us
- III. The God Who Longs to Be With Us
- IV. The God Who Became One With Us
- V. The God Who Continues to Be With Us
- VI. The God Who Will Come Back for Us
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The authors of the lesson this quarter are the directors of the Global Mission Centers of the General Conference of SDA. There are six of these centers, overseen by the General Conference, but located around the world. These include the Center for East Asian Religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto), the Center for South Asian Religions (Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism), the Global Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations, the World Jewish-Adventist Friendship Center, the Global Mission Urban Center, and the Center for Secular and Post-Christian Mission. (Introduction to the Quarter)
2. When it comes to mission, we are really talking about two different things. There is mission in the global sense, in which people from one culture and place reach out to people of another culture and place. But there is also a local side to mission, reaching out to one’s neighbors and friends with the good news about God. Sometimes our neighbors are very similar to others, sometimes there are as many cultural differences as one might experience going overseas. But the bottom line this quarter: Christians talk about mission a lot, but most don’t have any idea where to

- actually start. So this quarter's lesson will focus more locally and offer practical guidance in how to be more involved with God in mission. Mission is not only about God, it is also with God. (Introduction to the Quarter)
3. Thursday's lesson each week will offer a progression of practical challenges to encourage participation in God's mission, not only around the world, but in the neighborhoods in which we live. (Introduction to the Quarter)
 4. Mission finds its origin and purpose only in God. So the quarter begins with two lessons entitled "God's Mission to Us". Read Genesis 3:9. If we think of this as the first mission encounter, what can we learn about mission from the way God dealt with Adam and Eve here? What does this tell us about God? Do you think mission began in the Garden or at the original creation? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
 5. What was God's original purpose in creating the human race (Hebrews 2:5-9)? Read Genesis 3:10-15. What do we learn about God's mission to the human race from this passage? (Sunday's Lesson)
 6. Read Genesis 11:1-9. Wouldn't gathering humanity in one place with one language have made the mission easier? Read Genesis 12:1-3. How did God articulate His mission to Abraham? What is God's role in the mission that would happen through Abraham? Gen 28:15. What was the purpose of the Old Testament sanctuary? Exodus 29:43-45. What are some ways that you experience God's presence in your life? (Monday's Lesson)
 7. Read Matthew 1:18-23. What does this narrative regarding Jesus' birth tell us about God? In Matthew, if something is worth saying once, it is usually said two or three times (compare Matt 7:24-27 with 25:1-13). What do Matthew 18:20 and 28:20 add to what the birth narrative tells us about God? Read John 1:14-18. What does Christ's incarnation tell us about God's mission to us? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 8. Over a period of three years, God was able to reveal more of Himself and His mission to us than in all He had done through any other method. Why did God wait so long for the incarnation? Read John 3:16. How do God's love and mission interact in this verse? Read Matthew 28:18-20. What does this passage tell us about our role in God's mission? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 9. Read John 14:1-3. In what ways does this passage connect with the end-time message found in the Bible? According to Revelation 21:3, what is the final outcome of mission? (Thursday's Lesson)
 10. Throughout the quarter, the lesson invites readers to engage intentionally in God's mission. To see and experience God at work in real-life situations. This week there are two challenges: 1) Pray every day of the coming week for God to open your heart to be part of His mission. 2) Learn the name of someone in your life that you don't already know (neighbor, co-worker, shopkeeper, janitor, etc. Then begin praying for that person every day. (Thursday's Lesson)

11. “From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence. . . .” *Desire of Ages*, 22. How could God know and not be responsible for the outcome of His creative decisions? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

See, the question is, why this whole system? Why a tabernacle? Why priests? Why cherubs, sacrifices? Wouldn’t the Sermon on the Mount be better? Why didn’t Jesus, since he was there, why didn’t he stand on the top of that mountain and say, “Blessed are the meek, and blessed are the poor in spirit.” Why didn’t he do that? Would they have known he was there? It apparently was not appropriate. As we look at this, what is clarified? Most of all, what does it say about God? Remember in the Great Controversy the questions are about God. God has been accused of being arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving and severe, unworthy of our trust. God is demonstrating that this is not true, that he is infinitely worthy of our trust and that he’s none of those things that Satan has charged. And not only are we watching, as in our turn we look back on this record, but the angels were watching at the time. Now, what did the angels learn from this that would meet these accusations and confirm their trust in God, the loyal ones who had said, “Indeed, God, you can be trusted.” But he’s answering the questions and the charges even to these loyal angels. Is it clear to them? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Leviticus*, recorded October 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/5MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/6MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Now, the whole Old Testament system was given to Israel to help point this out, in many and various ways. It wasn’t the only way. And it was a way that was very much adapted to the culture in which they lived. Archaeologists have dug up similar temples and tabernacles, and priests with vestments, and so on. God gave them something they could understand.

It’s not a videotape of what’s going on in heaven. It definitely is a very much adapted representation that would help us at least to realize that sin leads to death, and that there is a provision that God has made, for there he is, represented by the Shekinah. And all those ceremonies suggested there is a forgiving God. But I must take my sins seriously, and I must be honest about it and confess it. I doubt they read a great deal more into it than that. Some didn’t read that into it. Pretty soon they came to think of the sacrifice as just a means of winning the favor of this God they were so afraid of, and thought maybe someday would even blot out

Moses, and they were amazed whenever he reappeared. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Hebrews, recorded July 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/73MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/74MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. {MB 127.1}

Had Christ come in His divine form, humanity could not have endured the sight. The contrast would have been too painful, the glory too overwhelming. Humanity could not have endured the presence of one of the pure, bright angels from glory; therefore Christ took not on Him the nature of angels; He came in the likeness of men. {5BC 1131.1}

God had power to hold Adam back from touching the forbidden fruit; but had He done this, Satan would have been sustained in his charge against God's arbitrary rule. Man would not have been a free moral agent, but a mere machine (RH June 4, 1901). {1BC 1084.2}

God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make His purposes to fit circumstances, but He allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but He knew that such a condition would exist. The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven—this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages. And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity (ST March 25, 1897). {6BC 1082.3}

But man was not abandoned to the results of the evil he had chosen. In the sentence pronounced upon Satan was given an intimation of redemption. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman," God said, "and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15. This sentence, spoken in the hearing of our first parents, was to them a promise. Before they heard of the thorn and the thistle, of the toil and sorrow that must be their portion, or of the dust to which they must return, they listened to words that could not fail of giving them hope. All that had been lost by yielding to Satan could be regained through Christ. {Ed 27.1}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4} {FE 124.1}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. {TMK 57.2}

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. {MB 142.1}

Christ stood at the head of humanity in the garb of humanity. So full of sympathy and love was His attitude that the poorest was not afraid to come to Him. He was kind to all, easily approached by the most lowly. He went from house to house, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the distressed. He took the little children in His arms and blessed them, and spoke words of hope and comfort to the weary mothers. With unfailing tenderness and gentleness He met every form of human woe and affliction. Not for Himself, but for others, did He labor. He was willing to humble Himself, to deny Himself. He did not seek to distinguish Himself. He was the servant of all. It was His meat and drink to be a comfort and a consolation to others, to gladden the sad and heavy-laden ones with whom He daily came in contact. {MM 19.3}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world’s Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life. {5T 738.4}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. Since sin brought separation between man and his Maker, no man has seen God at any time, except as He is manifested through Christ. {MH 419.1}

Promises are estimated by the truth of the one who makes them. Many men make promises only to break them, to mock the heart that trusted in them. Those who lean upon such men lean upon broken reeds. But God is behind the promises He makes. He is ever mindful of His covenant, and His truth endureth to all generations (MS 23, 1899). {7BC 942.12}

God's work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power, to meet the wants of men in the different ages. Beginning with the first gospel promise, and coming down through the patriarchal and Jewish ages, and even to the present time, there has been a gradual unfolding of the purposes of God in the plan of redemption. {PP 373.2}

The saving grace of Christ is designed for everyday life. Christ came not to save man in his sins, but from his sins. The principles of truth, abiding in the heart, will sanctify the life.—Manuscript 35, Jan. 8, 1893, "Publishing Work." {UL 22.6}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. "Unto *us* a child is born, unto *us* a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the "Son of man" who shares the throne of the universe. It is the "Son of man" whose name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love. {DA 25.3}

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled.

Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. {DA 26.2}

Jesus took the nature of humanity, in order to reveal to man a pure, unselfish love, to teach us how to love one another. {5BC 1126.1}

For our sake Jesus emptied Himself of His glory; He clothed His divinity with humanity that He might touch humanity, that His personal presence might be among us, that we might know that He was acquainted with all our trials, and sympathized with our grief, that every son and daughter of Adam might understand that Jesus is the friend of sinners (ST April 18, 1892). {7BC 927.1}

Christ had not exchanged His divinity for humanity; but He had clothed His divinity in humanity (RH Oct. 29, 1895). {5BC 1128.3}

When Adam's sin plunged the race into hopeless misery, God might have cut Himself loose from fallen beings. He might have treated them as sinners deserved to be treated. He might have commanded the angels of heaven to pour out upon our world the vials of His wrath. He might have removed this dark blot from His universe. But He did not do this. Instead of banishing them from His presence, He came still nearer to the fallen race. He gave His Son to become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth." Christ by His human relationship to men drew them close to God. He clothed His divine nature with the garb of humanity, and demonstrated before the heavenly universe, before the unfallen worlds, how much God loves the children of men. {SD 11.3}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {8T 286.4}

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God decided to give human beings unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. {CH 222.1}

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship Him in spirit and in truth. Christ revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature. Christ came to the world to sow it with truth. He held the keys to all the treasures of wisdom, and was able to open doors to science, and to reveal undiscovered stores of knowledge, were it essential to salvation. He presented to men that which was exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the

character of God, and sought to impress upon men the paternal love of the Father, who “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them, who treated them despitefully. In this He was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. Those who accepted His teaching were under the guardian care of angels, who were commissioned to strengthen, to enlighten, that the truth might renew and sanctify the soul. {FE 177.1}

For your sake I came into the world. I am working in your behalf. When I go away, I shall still work earnestly for you. I came into the world to reveal Myself to you, that you might believe. I go to the Father to co-operate with Him in your behalf. The object of Christ’s departure was the opposite of what the disciples feared. It did not mean a final separation. He was going to prepare a place for them, that He might come again, and receive them unto Himself. While He was building mansions for them, they were to build characters after the divine similitude. {DA 663.1}

The years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character.—GC 678 (1911). {1MCP 252.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*
Lesson 2 “God’s Mission to Us: Part 2”

Read for this week’s study

John 20:21, 22; Matthew 28:16–20; Revelation 14:6, 7; Deuteronomy 7:6, 11, 12; Revelation 7:9, 10.

Memory Text

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Triune God: The Origin of Mission
- III. Making Disciples: The Focus of Mission
- IV. The Eternal Gospel: The Message of Mission
- V. God’s People: The Channels of Mission
- VI. The World: The Arena of Mission
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read John 14:6 and compare it with John 1:9. How do you reconcile these two concepts? What does the understanding of God as “three” (Trinity) tell us about mission? Read John 20:21-22. How does the work of the Holy Spirit impact our mission? (Sunday’s Lesson)
2. Read Matthew 28:18-20. Here Jesus does three things: 1) Jesus declares His authority, 2) commissions the disciples, and 3) promises to be with them always and to the end of the earth. What type of outreach is the central focus of the passage? (Monday’s Lesson)
3. Read Revelation 14:6-7. What is the gospel in general? What do you think John means by “an everlasting gospel”? Is the gospel spelled out in verse 7 or should we look elsewhere in Revelation for a definition? If “judgment” is an equivalent for the gospel, how would one understand that? How would Revelation 13:8 and 1:5-6 help you answer the question ? (Tuesday’s Lesson)

4. Read Genesis 12:1-3. How are God's three promises to Abram expressed in these verses? Read Genesis 17:1-8. How does Genesis 17 clarify the meaning of these three promises? How would you see these promises being fulfilled in the stories of the patriarchs, the Exodus, and the conquest of Canaan? Were those events the final fulfillment of the promises to Abraham or did God have much more in mind? (Wednesday's Lesson)
5. Read Acts 1:8, Revelation 7:9-10 and Revelation 14:6. What do these texts suggest about the scope of mission? (Thursday's Lesson)
6. The lesson offers two challenges this week: 1) Pray every day for the community where you live. God has placed you there for a reason. 2) Research the demographics of your community. What ethnic groups predominate, what religions are represented, consider the average age, predominant religions, languages spoken, and the relative economic status of most members of the community. Ask God to show you how to represent His character to one or more of these demographic groups. (Thursday's Lesson)
7. The credibility of the church's influence in a community is determined by the extent the church's interactions with the community reflect the true nature and character of God. If all your community knew about God was what it learned from interacting with your church and its members, what would that picture of God be like? (Friday's Lesson)
8. What are the three commands in Revelation 14:7 calling on the world to do? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But in the larger great controversy setting, the gospel is the truth about our gracious God; the truth that ends the war, and confirms the loyalty of the universe, and wins some of us back to repentance and to trust. I believe (more strongly than I believe anything) that the most important of all our beliefs is the truth about our God. God is not the kind of person His enemies have made Him out to be—arbitrary, vengeful, and severe. He is instead precisely as His Son revealed Him to be. We believe the testimony of Jesus when He said, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." God is just as loving and gracious as His Son; just as willing to forgive and heal.

Could there be any better news than that? To me, that's the everlasting good news that holds the loyalty of the universe. And wins us back, and will hold our loyalty and trust for the rest of eternity. And this is the message we have the high privilege of sharing with people all over this planet, who may not know they are members of God's family, but who deserve to know, and

who deserve to hear this truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, "The Conflict in God's Family" recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>

All they argued about was God and his government, and what he wanted of his children. I believe the Great Controversy will end just as it began. The good news is the truth in the Great Controversy, the truth that needed to be known, and that is the truth about God. The errors, the opposition, they are all about God. And all the details are just reflections about this basic position that we take. Are we on God's side, or not, in the Great Controversy? Are we so settled into the truth about God "both intellectually and spiritually" that we could not be moved? Could you name anybody in the Bible other than the Lord himself, who was so settled into the truth about God, both intellectually he could talk about it, and spiritually he would stake his life on it, that he could not be moved? Could you name anybody? Job? That's what the whole book is about. And the three theologians came and said, "God is like this." He said, "He is not. He is like this. I can't make sense out of what is happening to me, but he could slay me and I'd still trust him." I believe Job was fully sealed and settled. If we were as settled as Job was, we'd be ready to pass through the time of trouble and the Lord could come.

But, you see, so often we are trying to settle people on all the other matters. If you settle people on the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the state of the dead, tithe, and health, without settling them on the truth about God they might keep the Sabbath as Jesus' enemies did. They might pay tithe as his enemies did. They might read the Bible as his enemies did. We could be developing in this campaign to win a million Adventists, we could, forbid the thought, develop a million enemies who faithfully keep the Sabbath, practice health reform, pay tithe, and read their Bibles. Now that is a horrible thought. But if we are not clear on the picture of God we might do well not to be in such a hurry. Have you read Ellen White's comment?

"The Lord is not now working to bring many into the truth, because there are so many unconverted in the church." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Revelation, recorded August 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/79MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/80MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ's own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world. {6T 55.1}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Therefore he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. . . . {HP 8.2}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world's Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life. . . . {HP 8.3}

In word and in deed the Messiah, during His earthly ministry, was to reveal to mankind the glory of God the Father. Every act of His life, every word spoken, every miracle wrought, was to make known to fallen humanity the infinite love of God. {PK 696.3}

Satan had clothed the Father in his own attributes, but Christ represented Him in His true character of benevolence and love. In the character in which Christ presented Him to the world it was as if He gave a new gift to man. . . . {LHU 36.4}

The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." {DA 302.1}

The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be "the express image of His person." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is shown the personality of the Father. {Ev 614.3}

The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. {CH 222.2}

We are to co-operate with the three highest powers in heaven,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—and these powers will work through us, making us workers together with God.—*Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 51. (1905) {Ev 617.3}

God will accept the wholehearted service, and will Himself make up the deficiencies.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 150. (1905) {CM 109.2}

Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of all 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. {9T 190.4}

In the person of Christ we behold the eternal God engaged in an enterprise of boundless mercy toward fallen man. {FLB 98.3}

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. {RC 293.5}

It is a wonderful thought that human beings can speak the Word of God, in simple words of comfort and encouragement. The humblest instruments will be used of God to sow the seeds of truth, which may spring up and bear fruit, because the one in whose heart they were sown needed help—a kind thought, a kind word, made effective by the One who has said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—Letter 329a, Nov. 16, 1905, to her 19-year-old granddaughter Mabel. {TDG 329.6}

He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself, He presented a lesson appropriate to the time and the circumstances. Every neglect or insult shown by men to their fellow men only made Him more conscious of their need of His divine-human sympathy. He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as the children of God. {RC 27.4}

Superstition, tradition, bigotry, and idolatry ruled the world. The Jews alone claimed to have a certain knowledge of God, and they were so exclusive, both socially and religiously, that they were despised by every other people. The high wall of separation which they had raised made the Jews a little world to themselves, and they called all other classes heathen and dogs. But Jesus committed to his disciples the scheme of making known their religion to all nations, tongues, and people. It was the most sublime enterprise ever intrusted to man—to preach a crucified and risen Saviour, and a full and free salvation to all men, both rich and poor, learned

and ignorant—to teach that Christ came to the world to pardon the repentant, and to offer them a love high as heaven, broad as the world, and enduring as eternity. {6Red 55.3}

As the rays of the sun penetrate to the remotest corners of the globe, so God designs that the light of the gospel shall extend to every soul upon the earth. {AG 26.3}

The lessons of Christ lay a foundation for a religion in which there is no caste—where Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God, because they are all branches of the living Vine. They believe in Christ as their personal Saviour. {TMK 100.5}

Angels do not come to the earth to denounce and to destroy, to rule and to exact homage, but are messengers of mercy to cooperate with the Captain of the Lord's host, to cooperate with the human agents who shall go forth to seek and save the lost sheep. Angels are commanded to encamp round about those who fear and love God. {LHU 207.3}

The truth will have the same molding influence upon hearts whatever the nationalities. Every human heart that accepts the truth will bow to the majesty of its sway, and when Christ is abiding in the heart by faith they will be of one mind, for Christ is not divided. They will be strong in His strength, happy and united in His peace. The truth is the same in its subduing power upon all hearts. It will refine and ennoble the heart of the receiver. {OHC 171.5}

To give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own, and thus make Him known. And in whatever way we make known the Father or the Son, we glorify God (MS 16, 1890). {7BC 979.4}

When divine power is combined with human effort, the work will spread like fire in the stubble. God will employ agencies whose origin man will be unable to discern; angels will do a work which men might have had the blessing of accomplishing, had they not neglected to answer the claims of God.—*The Review and Herald*, Dec. 15, 1885. {1SM 118.3}

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. Wherever hearts are open to receive the truth, Christ is ready to instruct them. He reveals to them the Father, and the worship acceptable to Him who reads the heart. For such He uses no parables. To them, as to the woman at the well, He says, "I that speak unto thee am He." {DA 194.2}

Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.—SC 11 (1892). {1MCP 250.1}

Through the Jewish nation it was God's purpose to impart rich blessings to all peoples. Through Israel the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His light to the whole world. The nations

of the world, through following corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. Yet in His mercy God 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. {COL 286.1}

Jesus had begun to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to the world. Though He was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of His nation. In face of their prejudices He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate with them at their tables,—partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands,—taught in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy. {DA 193.2}

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}

From a race of slaves the Israelites had been exalted above all peoples to be the peculiar treasure of the King of kings. God had separated them from the world, that He might commit to them a sacred trust. He had made them the depositaries of His law, and He purposed, through them, to preserve among men the knowledge of Himself. Thus the light of heaven was to shine out to a world enshrouded in darkness, and a voice was to be heard appealing to all peoples to turn from their idolatry to serve the living God. If the Israelites would be true to their trust, they would become a power in the world. God would be their defense, and He would exalt them above all other nations. His light and truth would be revealed through them, and they would stand forth under His wise and holy rule as an example of the superiority of His worship over every form of idolatry. {PP 314.2}

God desired to bring all peoples under His merciful rule. He desired that the earth should be filled with joy and peace. He created man for happiness, and He longs to fill human hearts with the peace of heaven. He desires that the families below shall be a symbol of the great family above. {COL 290.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*

Lesson 3 “God’s Call to Mission”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 11:1–9; Genesis 12:1–3; Daniel 9:24–27; Matthew 1:21; Genesis 12:10–13:1; Acts 8:1–4; Acts 1:8.

Memory Text

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Moving Beyond Our Comfort Zone
- III. Becoming a Blessing to the Whole World
- IV. Abraham’s Call
- V. The Early Church and Comfort Zones
- VI. Starting From Where You Are
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Genesis 12:1-3 is often titled “The Call of Abraham”. God called Abram to leave his home and family to move to a faraway place that he did not know. This is often thought of as the first call to mission in the Bible. But a full understanding of this “call” must include the context. The immediate context of the call to Abraham is the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9. In what way is Genesis 12:1-3 the wider context of Genesis 11:1-9? Why was God so set on populating the entire earth? (Sunday’s Lesson)
2. In Genesis 12:1-3, God’s call to mission was for the purpose of putting the right person in the right place. If God called you to go somewhere without knowing where you were going, how would you respond? Why? (Monday’s Lesson)
3. Read Genesis 12:10 – 13:1. What things happened to Abram as soon as he arrived in the land God showed him? Was going to Egypt a mistake? What do you think would have happened had Abram not gone to Egypt? In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 130, it

says: “In concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, he betrayed a distrust of the divine care.” When is taking care of yourself a “distrust of the divine care”?
(Tuesday’s Lesson)

4. Read Acts 8:1-4. In the early church, what brought about the scattering of the believers beyond their comfort zone? When much of the Jerusalem church was scattered through Judea and Samaria, why did the apostles stay in the city? What does Acts 11:19 add to our understanding of this scattering? What does Galatians 2:11-12 tell us about the attitude of even Peter to the Gentile outreach?
(Wednesday’s Lesson)
5. Read Acts 10:9-15, 28-29. What message was the Lord trying to give Peter? What relevance does the same message have for our mission to the world today?
(Wednesday’s Lesson)
6. Read Acts 1:8. What principle did Jesus present for being His witnesses to the world? Which do you think is harder, to witness to your own family, neighbors and friends or to go overseas to a very different culture? (Thursday’s Lesson)
7. Two challenges for this week: 1) Identify a people group in your community that the church has not made efforts to reach. 2) Pray for an opportunity to engage people who belong to this group. (Thursday’s Lesson)
8. “There are in our world many who are nearer the kingdom of God than we suppose.” By what process can we find people who belong in this category? (Friday’s Lesson)
9. When it comes to your own life and experiences, how would you define the term “mission”? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

“At first, the people of the whole world had only one language. . . . And they said to one another . . . ‘Now let’s build a city with a tower that reaches the sky.’” (GNB)

Now these inhabitants of Babel, did they believe in God? Did they believe in His power? Did they believe He had the power to drown the whole world in a flood? Did they believe His promise that He would never do it again? And so they built the tower. They didn’t build the tower because they didn’t believe in God, but because they did believe in God and it scared them that He has so much power. So perhaps we need not spend so much time discussing God’s power, unless we don’t believe that He has it. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, “God’s Way of Restoring Trust” recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>*

Now, as Christians, loyal members of the family, we all remember Christ's commission, Matthew 24:14: "This Good News about the Kingdom, [and especially the way the King runs His kingdom,] will be preached through all the world . . . and then the end will come" (GNB). Could you conceive of any higher honor or pleasure, or privilege, than to join with the loyal angels in making this good news known to all the world, this everlasting truth about our God? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #16, "God's Last Pleading with His Children" recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

And now as the disciples went out to explain it the best they could, and they did learn to do it better and better as time went on. You remember Peter still had much to learn. And the brethren in Jerusalem had much to learn. They still thought they should hang on to the ceremonies, you remember. The commission was given to the early Christian church when it still had a lot of theological progress to make. You see, just because we are commissioned, it doesn't mean our theology is perfect! Because certainly the early Christian leaders did not have a perfect theology, but they had the essence of it, and they went out to give the good news. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

This confederacy was born of rebellion against God. The dwellers on the plain of Shinar established their kingdom for self-exaltation, not for the glory of God. Had they succeeded, a mighty power would have borne sway, banishing righteousness and inaugurating a new religion. The world would have been demoralized. Erroneous theories would have diverted minds from allegiance to the divine statutes, and the law of Jehovah would have been ignored and forgotten. But God never leaves the world without witnesses for Him. At this time there were men who humbled themselves before God and cried unto Him. "O God," they pleaded, "interpose between Thy cause, and the plans and methods of men." "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded." Genesis 11:5. Angels were sent to bring to nought the purposes of the builders. {8T 213.3}

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}

In the Teacher sent from God, heaven gave to men its best and greatest. He who had stood in the councils of the Most High, who had dwelt in the innermost sanctuary of the Eternal, was the One chosen to reveal in person to humanity the knowledge of God. {Ed 73.2}

If in our ignorance we make missteps, the Saviour does not forsake us. We need never feel that we are alone. Angels are our companions. The Comforter that Christ promised to send in His name abides with us. In the way that leads to the City of God there are no difficulties which those who trust in Him may not overcome. There are no dangers which they may not escape. There is not a sorrow, not a grievance, not a human weakness, for which He has not provided a remedy. {MH 249.1}

An angel guided Philip to the one who was seeking for light and who was ready to receive the gospel, and today angels will guide the footsteps of those workers who will allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify their tongues and refine and ennoble their hearts. The angel sent to Philip could himself have done the work for the Ethiopian, but this is not God's way of working. It is His plan that men are to work for their fellow men. {AA 109.2}

He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself He presented a lesson appropriate to the time and the circumstances. Every neglect or insult shown by men to their fellow men only made Him more conscious of their need of His divine-human sympathy. He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as the children of God. {MH 25.5}

How carefully the Lord worked to overcome the prejudice against the Gentiles that had been so firmly fixed in Peter's mind by his Jewish training! By the vision of the sheet and its contents He

sought to divest the apostle's mind of this prejudice and to teach the important truth that in heaven there is no respect of persons; that Jew and Gentile are alike precious in God's sight; that through Christ the heathen may be made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the gospel. {AA 136.3}

We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls. {DA 347.3}

It is the love of God continually transferred to man that enables him to impart light. Into the hearts of all who are united to God by faith the golden oil of love flows freely, to shine out again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God. {COL 418.5}

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}

To us also the promise of Christ's abiding presence is given. The lapse of time has wrought no change in His parting promise. He is with us today as truly as He was with the disciplines, and He will be with us "even unto the end." {8T 17.1}

All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {DA 827.3}

The Lord Jesus is our efficiency in all things; His Spirit is to be our inspiration; and as we place ourselves in His hands to be channels of light, our means of doing good will never be exhausted, for the resources of the power of Jesus Christ are to be at our command. We may draw upon His fullness and receive of that grace which has no limit. The Captain of our salvation at every step would teach us that almighty power is at the demand of living faith. He says, "Without me

ye can do nothing;" but again declares that "greater works than these shall ye do; because I go unto my Father." {HP 319.4}

It is a law of heaven that as we receive we are to impart. The Christian is to be a benefit to others; thus he himself is benefited. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 11:25). This is not merely a promise. It is a law of God's divine administration, a law by which He designs that the streams of beneficence shall be kept, like the waters of the great deep, in constant circulation, perpetually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the power of Christian missions. . . . {HP 317.5}

It is our privilege to have a calm, close, happy walk with Jesus every day we live. {TMK 320.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*

Lesson 4 “Sharing God's Mission”

Read for this week's study

Genesis 18; James 5:16; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; Genesis 19:1–29; Genesis 12:1–9.

Memory Text

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34, 35, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Gift of Hospitality
- III. Abraham's Love for Everyone
- IV. Abraham's Spirit of Prayer
- V. Abraham's Mission
- VI. Submission to God's Will
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Genesis 18:1-15. The first verse says that “Yahweh” appeared to Abraham. Who is this “Yahweh”? How does Abraham respond to the three visitors who pass by his tent? What must Lot have learned from Abraham during their time together? What might Abraham's response of hospitality have to do with mission? What tone of voice do you imagine Yahweh used when He said to Sarah, “But you did laugh”? Was Sarah's laugh an expression of doubt? (Sunday's Lesson)
2. Ellen White notes: “Wherever (Abraham) pitched his tent, he set up beside it the altar for sacrifice and worship. When the tent was removed, the altar remained; and many a roving Canaanite, whose knowledge of God had been gained from the life of Abraham His servant, tarried at that altar to offer sacrifice to Jehovah.” *Education*, 187. What would be the modern-day equivalent of Abraham's altar? (Sunday's Lesson)

3. Read Genesis 18:16-33. Why do you think Yahweh engages Abraham before going to Sodom (see verses 17-19)? What actually was the “sin of Sodom”? On what basis did Abraham urge the Lord to spare Sodom (18:23-25)? Abraham lived apart from Sodom to preserve the purity of his family. But at least two times he acted to save Sodom from the consequences of its own actions. How do you maintain a balance between preserving the faith (fortress) and mission (salt)? (Monday’s Lesson)
4. Reflect further on Genesis 18:23-35 compared with James 5:16. The lesson suggests that what Abraham did with the Lord on the way to Sodom is a form of intercessory prayer. What do you think is the function of intercessory prayer in the ultimate scheme of things? How can praying for someone far away or even someone you don’t personally know make any difference? If Jesus’ intercession is not really needed (John 16:25-27), what role can intercessory prayer possibly have within the cosmic conflict? How do you find the balance between persevering in prayer (Abraham, “night and day”) and “vain repetitions” (Matt 23). (Tuesday’s Lesson)
5. Read Genesis 19:1-4. In what ways did Lot behave like Abraham at the beginning of this chapter? Read Genesis 19:18-22. How does this part of the story recall Abraham’s intercession for Sodom? Read Genesis 19:22-24. What do you think gave the angels such a sense of urgency? Was Abraham’s intercession for Sodom a failure (Gen 19:29)? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
6. The lesson suggests that modern-day cities can be especially difficult places to share the gospel. Effective work for the cities today will require much intercessory prayer. How do you relate to the above assertions? (Thursday’s Lesson)
7. A challenge for this week: Find a way to contact someone who is being directly affected by a difficult situation similar to your own. Tell that person you are praying for him or her, and ask God to show you what you can do to help. What experience do you have with approaches like this? (Thursday’s Lesson)
8. “(Abraham’s) allegiance to God was unswerving, while his affability and benevolence inspired confidence and friendship. . . .” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 134. How does one go about maintaining that kind of balance? (Friday’s Lesson)
9. Read Genesis 19:30-36. What does that tell you about the character of Lot and his family? How did they get that way? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

If we all united in prayer, every last one of us, and God emptied heaven of all the angels to work on that character, would that necessarily bring him across? If it could, then how come God lost Lucifer and one third of the angels? They lived in His very presence, and He couldn’t keep them. They were free to leave. And you know He did everything He could to win them back. And Christ led the angels, the loyal angels, in an endless campaign to win the disloyal angels back,

and they could not do it. Nor could Jesus win Judas. Think how Jesus prayed for His disciples, and He could not win Judas.

So sometimes we put God in a very bad light. In fact, it then rolls back on Him the total responsibility for there being any lost. He just didn't work hard enough. And then we are in a sorry situation, or can be. I think the best thing to do is what you've done, to consider the implications of this. And when the implications run so directly counter to the clearest truths of scripture, then they can't be so. Like we're going to come to "spirits in prison" in a while. That will be another example of that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1 & 2 Peter & James, recorded July 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/75MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/76MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: This very important text— John 16:26—that you referred to as perhaps the most misunderstood or ignored text: "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you." There are so many texts, though, about intercession, and then here's this one that seems clear ***the other way***. We don't need an intercessor. You talked about the principle of understanding in the light of all of the texts. What would you say to that, if I would say, "Look, let's take all of these texts that talk about intercession and understand this one in the light of all these texts."

Graham: Yes. We so often say that if it's a difficult verse, it should be understood in the light of all the clear ones.

Lou: Right.

Graham: Well, what's so interesting about that is that Jesus labeled this verse "plain and clear." He didn't say it was difficult.

Lou: So we really didn't need any other.

Graham: I will accept the Son of God's evaluation as a statement. It is one of the only ones in the whole Bible designated as "plain and clear." And I will understand all the other verses in the Bible in the light of this one. However, one should never leave the others out. We must build a model of understanding based on everything in the Bible. We must be able to put that precious verse in, and all the others, too. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #11 with Lou Venden, "God's Emergency Measures" recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/11MMCAG>

But then, if we trusted God enough, even respected and revered Him enough to take the time to listen, we might hear God provoke the questions Himself. You think about how God stirred His friend Abraham as He was on His way down to Sodom and Gomorrah to consume those cities. He said, "I wouldn't do this without first telling my friend, Abraham." Then you remember Abraham's reply, and how he dared to reason with his God. Look at Genesis 18:23, 25. This is just a part of the whole conversation: "Then Abraham drew near, and said, 'Wilt thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? . . . Far be that from thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'" (RSV)

Have you ever dared say that to God? Was God offended? No, look at James 2:23, next on the list: "Abraham was called God's friend." (GNT) {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15, "Talking to God as a Friend" recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

Kind words simply spoken, little attentions simply bestowed, will sweep away the clouds of temptation which gather over the soul. The true expression of heaven-born sympathy has power to open the door of hearts that need the fragrance of Christlike words, and the simple, delicate touch of the spirit of Christ's love. {MH 354.4}

Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1076.2}

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

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple courts, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. {PK 369.3}

It is when we come into difficult places that He reveals His power and wisdom in answer to humble prayer. Have confidence in Him as a prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God. He will

reveal Himself to you as One who can help in every emergency. He who created man, who gave him his wonderful physical, mental, and spiritual faculties, will not withhold that which is necessary to sustain the life He has given. He who has given us His word—the leaves of the tree of life—will not withhold from us a knowledge of how to provide food for His needy children. {MH 199.4}

The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour's life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man's redemption. {SC 21.2}

Could your eyes be opened, you would see your heavenly Father bending over you in love; and could you hear His voice it would be in tones of compassion to you who are prostrate with suffering and affliction. Stand fast in His strength; there is rest *for you*. {HP 272.5}

He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. {ML 289.5}

God is to us a tender, compassionate, heavenly Father. {ML 289.6}

The Lord declares by His prophet, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3. While the sinner is yet far from the Father's house, wasting his substance in a strange country, the Father's heart is yearning over him; and every longing awakened in the soul to return to God is but the tender pleading of His Spirit, wooing, entreating, drawing the wanderer to his Father's heart of love. {SC 54.1}

Many are the ways in which God is seeking to make Himself known to us and bring us into communion with Him. Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of His hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature. The green fields, the lofty trees, the buds and flowers, the passing cloud, the falling rain, the babbling brook, the glories of the heavens, speak to our hearts, and invite us to become acquainted with Him who made them all. {SC 85.1}

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character are revealed. By the marvelous display of His love in giving "His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," the character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. Through Christ our heavenly Father is made known as the God of love. {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 5}

The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. {DA 568.5}

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity, and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, He who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone able to reveal the character of the Deity to mankind. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {MH 422.2}

And the same compassion that reached out to rescue Peter is extended to every soul who has fallen under temptation. It is Satan's special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon. But why should we fear, when God has said, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me?" Isaiah 27:5. Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ. {COL 156.1}

In the whole Satanic force there is not power to overcome one soul who in simple trust casts himself on Christ. {COL 157.3}

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. {FE 179.3}

In the day of affliction, when the enemy presses us, we shall walk among the angels. They will be like a wall of fire about us; and we shall one day walk with them in the city of God. . . . {LHU 341.4}

A guardian angel is appointed to every follower of Christ. These heavenly watchers shield the righteous from the power of the wicked one. This Satan himself recognized when he said: "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" Job 1:9, 10. . . . The angels appointed to minister to the children of God have at all times access to His presence. {GC 512.2}

Jesus employed no miraculous agency to compel men to believe in him. They were left to choose or reject him, of their own free will. No direct power was to force them into obedience, and destroy the free moral agency that God has given to man. {4Red 86.3}

In the very fact that men are free moral agents, God teaches us not to be forced or compelled into any course of action, also that as responsible beings in copartnership with God we are to represent God in character. We are to have an interest in our brother, in our neighbor, in all around (Letter 65, 1895). {5BC 1098.1}

Today the truths of Scripture are to be brought before the great men of the world in order that they may choose between obedience to God's law and allegiance to the prince of evil. God sets everlasting truth before them—truth that will make them wise unto salvation, but He does not force them to accept it. If they turn from it, He leaves them to themselves, to be filled with the fruit of their own doings. {AA 241.2}

It is not the plan of God to compel men to yield their wicked unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which to accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture (*Redemption: or the Miracles of Christ*, pp. 112, 113). {1BC 1120.5}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

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 the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in 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. {DA 466.4}

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 enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration 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. {DA 466.5}

But when we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure. {COL 363.1}

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; for he is the source of every right impulse. {OW, December 1, 1909 par. 10}

If the human agent consents, God can and will so identify His will with all our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His Word, that when obeying His will, we are only carrying out the impulses of our minds. {UL 187.5}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*

Lesson 5 “Excuses to Avoid Mission”

Read for this week's study

Jonah 1–4; Nahum 1:1; 2 Kings 17:5, 6; Psalm 24:1; James 1:27; Isaiah 6:1–8.

Memory Text

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me’” (Isaiah 6:8, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Our Excuses: Fear
- III. Our Excuses: False Views
- IV. Our Excuses: Inconvenience
- V. Our Excuses: Uncomfortable Confrontations
- VI. Here Am I, Send Me
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The lesson this week zeros in on a single, biblical example of someone avoiding mission; the story of Jonah. Since Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire, the story of Jonah is set in the context of that nation's interactions with Old Testament Israel. What do the following texts tell us about the background to the story of Jonah (Nahum 1:1; 3:1-3; 2 Kings 17:5-6; 19:32-37)? When it comes to mission, what are you afraid of? (Sunday's Lesson)
2. Read Jonah 1:1-12. What picture of God did the sailors in Jonah's story have? Read Jonah 1:17 – 2:10. What did Jonah learn about God from the fish experience? What kind of sacrifices did Jonah and the sailors make (2:9; 1:14-16)? Read Jonah 1:14-16. What did Jonah do to convert the sailors? What caused Jonah to change from unwillingness to willingness? (Monday's Lesson)
3. Read Jonah 3:1-3. What changed Jonah's unwillingness into willingness? Read Jonah 3:4-5. What is the difference between the response of the Assyrians and the

- response of the sailors in chapter 1:14-16? What does this difference imply about working with people who have little knowledge of God? (Tuesday's Lesson)
4. Read Jonah 4. What was Jonah's actual excuse for not going immediately to Nineveh? Why would God's gracious character bother him so much? What lay behind the question God asks Jonah in verse 4? According to the story, God mercifully provides the plant to Jonah and then arranges its destruction. How shall we understand this? Where in this chapter is God's side of the story most clearly expressed? Do you think the repentance of Nineveh was genuine? Why did God accept their repentance when they were so ignorant of His name and His ways? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 5. Reflecting on Jonah 4:10-11, how should we respond to God's concern for bullies, abusers and killers? What implications does that have for mission? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 6. If the Holy Spirit is everywhere and in every place, why do missionaries need to go out into the world? (Thursday's Lesson)
 7. Nineveh was an early megacity and God cared for it. When I was small, there were three megacities in the world; New York, London and Tokyo. All three had about eight million people each. Today there are 48 cities in the world with more than eight million people in them. What implications does that have for mission? (Thursday's Lesson)
 8. When God called Abraham in Genesis 12:1-4a and 22:1-3a, Abraham complied with God's command without even a murmur of protest. On the other hand, in Genesis 18:20-25 Abraham resists what God is saying. What do you think caused the difference in Abraham's reaction? If God called you to go somewhere without telling you where, what would you do? How would you know it was God calling? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
 9. What other Bible stories of God's callings can you think of? Which of these Bible characters were very compliant, and which offer some words of protest? Of the many excuses people make to avoid mission, which are legitimate? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
 10. Make a list of ten people you know are not believers. You may want to call them "disciples". Pray daily for each of your ten disciples. Pray that your relationships with each of them will grow in a deeper, more trusting direction. (Friday's Lesson)
 11. Another option: Choose a city near you and one in another part of the world and begin praying for the people those cities. (Friday's Lesson)
 12. How do you deal with fear as an excuse for not doing mission?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Maybe more seriously, sometimes God's incredible graciousness has even been an embarrassment to some of His people. Do you remember when the prophet Jonah was asked by God to go and give a serious message of warning to Nineveh? At first he ran away. Later, under considerable pressure, he went and delivered his message, hardly a "missionary volunteer." Think of the pressure the Lord had to put on Jonah to get him to go up there to Nineveh and deliver a very serious message, and to a very dangerous people, to be sure. Jonah walked the streets and said, "Forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed."

Then he went out and sat down on a hillside nearby to watch the city come to its end. But it didn't. The people of Nineveh repented, and the city was not destroyed. And Jonah complained angrily to God. He said, "God, that's why I ran away. I knew You were far too kind to go through with that threat, with that prediction. You've made me look like a false prophet. I'm humiliated enough to die."

See part of his words here, on the Bible Reference Sheet, in Jonah 4:2, 3. Imagine saying this to God!

Lord, didn't I say before I left home that this is just what you would do? That's why I did my best to run away to Spain! I knew that you are a loving and merciful God, always patient, always kind, and always ready to change your mind and not punish. Now then, Lord, let me die. I am better off dead than alive. (GNT)

Think of this man knowing God that well in Old Testament times. Those are words Isaiah, Jeremiah, Moses, or Abraham would have been proud to speak. They never used better words than that about our God. But Jonah was ashamed. This had caused him embarrassment. He was humiliated enough, he felt that his reputation had been so destroyed, that he was prepared to die!

God reasoned with frustrated Jonah. "Have you no pity for these people? Aren't you glad that they have chosen to repent?" He even mentioned the cattle in the city, "Don't you even care about them?" at the end of the book. But Jonah was much more concerned about his own reputation, his own reputation as a reliable prophet. Moses, Abraham, Jeremiah, Paul, all announced themselves as proud to know God as they did. They were proud of Him and proud of the good news. Jonah also knew God, but he was ashamed. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #19, "How Soon Will the Conflict Be Over?" recorded June 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/19MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

Yet Nineveh, wicked though it had become, was not wholly given over to evil. He who “beholdeth all the sons of men” (Psalm 33:13) and “seeth every precious thing” (Job 28:10) perceived in that city many who were reaching out after something better and higher, and who, if granted opportunity to learn of the living God, would put away their evil deeds and worship Him. And so in His wisdom God revealed Himself to them in an unmistakable manner, to lead them, if possible, to repentance. {PK 265.3}

The instrument chosen for this work was the prophet Jonah, the son of Amittai. To him came the word of the Lord, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before Me.” Jonah 1:1, 2. {PK 266.1}

Thus God’s people, exposed to the deceptive power and unsleeping malice of the prince of darkness, and in conflict with all the forces of evil, are assured of the unceasing guardianship of heavenly angels. {GC 513.1}

The Lord is our helper, our defense. God has provided that no soul that trusts in Him shall be overcome by the enemy. {CTr 47.4}

In the closing scenes of this earth’s history, when intensity is taking possession of every earthly element, the Lord requires of us a vigilance that knows no relaxation. But we are not left to struggle alone. Amid the dangers increasing on every hand, those who walk humbly before God, distrustful of their own wisdom, will have angels as their helpers and protectors. In times of special peril they will know the power of God’s keeping care.—RH April 25, 1907. {TA 272.3}

Nothing can happen in any part of the universe without the knowledge of Him who is omnipresent. Not a single event of human life is unknown to our Maker. While Satan is constantly devising evil, the Lord our God overrules all, so that it will not harm His obedient, trusting children. The same power that controls the boisterous waves of the ocean can hold in check all the power of rebellion and of crime. God says to one as to the other, “Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.” {3BC 1141.5}

Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. The very highest angels in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage. . . . {4BC 1173.5}

The angels are with us every day, to guard and protect us from the assaults of the enemy. {TA 19.1}

God has given us these precious things as an expression of His love. The Lord is a lover of the beautiful, and to please and gratify us He has spread before us the beauties of nature, even as

an earthly parent seeks to place beautiful things before the children that He loves. The Lord is always pleased to see us happy. Sinful as it is with all its imperfections, the Lord has lavished upon this earth the useful and the beautiful. The beautiful, tinted flowers tell of His tenderness and love. They have a language of their own, reminding us of the Giver. {UL 327.3}

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness. {COL 386.1}

All whose hearts are in sympathy with the heart of Infinite Love will seek to reclaim, and not to condemn. Christ dwelling in the soul is a spring that never runs dry. Where He abides, there will be an overflowing of beneficence.— *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 39. (1896) {Ev 174.3}

The work of Christ is to redeem, to restore, to seek and to save that which was lost. If we are connected with Christ, we also are partakers of the divine nature and are to be laborers together with God. We are to bind up the bruised and wounded soul; and if a brother or a sister has erred, we are not to join with the enemy in destroying and ruining, but to work with Christ to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. {HP 291.2}

He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God. {DA 297.1}

As His representatives among men, God does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. Christ took humanity that He might reach humanity. A divine-human Saviour was needed to bring salvation to the world. And to men and women has been committed the sacred trust of making known “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:8. {AA 134.2}

All heaven is interested in the work going on in this world, which is to prepare men and women for the future, immortal life. It is God’s plan that human agencies shall have the high honor of acting as co-workers with Jesus Christ in the salvation of souls. {5T 573.3}

And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men.

Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator. {SC 79.1}

God might have committed the message of the gospel, and all the work of loving ministry, to the heavenly angels. He might have employed other means for accomplishing His purpose. But in His infinite love He chose to make us co-workers with Himself, with Christ and the angels, that we might share the blessing, the joy, the spiritual uplifting, which results from this unselfish ministry. {SC 79.2}

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God gave to human beings an unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. The gift of Christ reveals the Father’s heart. It testifies that, having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. {9T 254.1}

The work of beneficence is twice blessed. While he that gives to the needy blesses others, he himself is blessed in a still greater degree. The grace of Christ in the soul is developing traits of character that are the opposite of selfishness,—traits that will refine, ennoble, and enrich the life. Acts of kindness performed in secret will bind hearts together, and will draw them closer to the heart of Him from whom every generous impulse springs. The little attentions, the small acts of love and self-sacrifice, that flow out from the life as quietly as the fragrance from a flower—these constitute no small share of the blessings and happiness of life. And it will be found at last that the denial of self for the good and happiness of others, however humble and uncommended here, is recognized in heaven as the token of our union with Him, the King of glory, who was rich, yet for our sake became poor. {MB 82.2}

Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God’s purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself. The soul, corrupted and deformed, is to be purified, transformed, that it may be clothed in “the beauty of the Lord our God,” “conformed to the image of His Son.” “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” Psalm 90:17; Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 2:9. Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God’s image, may attain. {MB 60.3}

The blessings of salvation are for every soul. Nothing but his own choice can prevent any man from becoming a partaker of the promise in Christ by the gospel. {DA 403.2}

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He

has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men. {SC 10.3}

By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith. {MB 76.3}

All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, ... that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. {TMK 99.5}

The Lord has His eye upon every soul that is seeking Him. He is interested in every soul needing help, and He will not leave one in the darkness of error, but step by step will lead him into the full light of the truth that is shining from every page of the Scriptures. . . . The Lord sees our every act. He knows just what progress we have made in the Christian pathway. How kind, how tender, our Great Shepherd is! With intense interest He looks down from His exalted throne upon the sheep of His pasture, and gives them grace and strength. . . . {HP 322.3}

The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, bring out in distinct lines God's pitying love for those who are straying from Him. Although they have turned away from God, He does not leave them in their misery. He is full of kindness and tender pity toward all who are exposed to the temptations of the artful foe. {COL 198.1}

The wheellike complications that appeared to the prophet to be involved in such confusion were under the guidance of an infinite hand. The Spirit of God, revealed to him as moving and directing these wheels, brought harmony out of confusion; so the whole world was under His control. Myriads of glorified beings were ready at His word to overrule the power and policy of evil men, and bring good to His faithful ones. . . . {5T 752.2}

In the visions given to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, and to John we see how closely heaven is connected with the events taking place upon the earth and how great is the care of God for those who are loyal to Him. The world is not without a ruler. The program of coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge. . . . {5T 753.3}

He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, can carry forward His great work harmoniously. That which appears to finite minds entangled and complicated, the Lord's hand can keep in perfect order. He can devise ways and means to thwart the purposes of wicked men, and He will bring to confusion the counsels of them that plot mischief against His people. {5T 754.2}

God does not expect that with their different temperaments His people will each be prepared for any and every place. Let all remember that there are varied trusts. It is not the work of any man to prescribe the work of any other man contrary to his own convictions of duty. It is right to give counsel and suggest plans; but every man should be left free to seek direction from God, whose he is and whom he serves. {6T 334.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*
Lesson 6 “Motivation and Preparation for Mission”

Read for this week's study

Luke 24:1–12; Luke 24:36–49; Acts 1:12–26; Hebrews 10:24, 25; Acts 2:1–41; 1 Corinthians 11:1.

Memory Text

“ ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me’ ” (Luke 24:44, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. To Share the Good News
- III. A Prophetic Foundation
- IV. Waiting and Mission
- V. “Whom You Crucified”
- VI. A Picture of the Early Church
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. What did it mean to “preach Christ” in the First Century? What would be the equivalent today? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
2. Read Luke 24:1-12. What was the response of those who first heard that Jesus had risen from the dead? What do you think was the basis for that response? The women bringing the report were excited because they were talking about their own personal experience. What is your own personal experience with Jesus/God? (Sunday's Lesson)
3. Read Luke 24:36-49. Why was this such a pivotal experience for the apostles? If Jesus now had a supernatural body, why did He ask the disciples for food? Prophecy played a major role in the disciples discovery of who Jesus is. What is the role of Bible prophecy in the 21st Century? (Monday's Lesson)

4. Read Acts 1:12-26. What were the disciples of Jesus, numbering 120 men and women, doing while they were waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit? How do we know when to wait and when to go? Why do you think they needed to replace Judas, why not just go ahead with 11? Who were these “disciples” that are not mentioned in the Gospels? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
5. Read Acts 2:1-41. What happened to the disciples after they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost? What does it mean when the text says that the disciples were speaking in “other tongues”? Why does Peter’s explanation of what is going on focus on Joel 2:28-32? What is he doing with the Old Testament here? What evidence did Peter give that Jesus was raised from the dead? What evidence is there in the text that the gospel is for *everyone*? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
6. Read Acts 2:41-47. What did the fledgling church do with the newly baptized believers? What methods did they use to mentor the new believers as they grew in the faith? (Thursday’s Lesson)
7. Think of someone in your life who you wish was a believer. Pray every day for him or her to have a personal experience with God. (Thursday’s Lesson)
8. Who are you discipling currently? Look for ways to bring him or her into relationship with Jesus and fellowship with other believers. (Friday’s Lesson)
9. Based on your own life experiences, what could you tell other people about the goodness and love of God? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

There’s much talk these days, as the Great Controversy comes to its end, about the work of the Holy Spirit and how he will manifest himself. And many feel that he’s very active in the world today. We see this not only in our church, but even more in other communions, don’t we? What do we really expect to see under the latter rain when the Holy Spirit has more freedom to work than ever before?

What do you want the Holy Spirit to do for you? Do you want to speak in some unknown tongue that requires an interpreter? Now that’s not what happened at Pentecost. They didn’t need any interpreters, did they? The disciples spoke and everyone in the audience—they’d come in from all over the Mediterranean world said, “Say, each one of us hears and understands in his own tongue.” That’s the gift of communication that was given at Pentecost. What we see around us now is something else.

Well, what do you really want the Holy Spirit to do most? Do you want to be swept up into an experience of such excitement that you can’t think clearly and calmly about the truth and weigh the evidence on either side? Isn’t it dangerous to be swept off our feet into some of these eddies of excitement that we see around us.

And if we want the Holy Spirit to do his work for us, how can we best cooperate with him? And how can we know if we're coming under the influence of the Spirit of God or the power of the enemy who has shown such skill in counterfeiting the work of God? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, PUC Teacher's Conference, #8 "He Walks These Grounds", recorded April 1974, Angwin, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/8MMPUCTEACH>*

But the most impressive illustration of how God seeks to convince us—not on authority and power, but on the basis of truth—was provided by Jesus Himself on the road to Emmaus. And that's described in Luke 24, on the Bible Reference Sheet. I wish we could read the whole story:

[But] while they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him [they didn't know Christ was walking with them]. And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding?" [You see, they were having a conversation about God (as we are) on the road to Emmaus.] And they stood still, looking sad. . . . And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. . . . Later, when he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him. (RSV)

Why did He not reveal who He was at the beginning, and say, "What are your questions? You know that I will give you authoritative answers, and I will expect you to believe them." He did not reveal who He was until He had led them to an intelligent confidence based on the unquestionable evidence of Scripture. Then He revealed who He was. If the Infinite One will do that, how dare we presume to take any shortcuts? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, "God's Way of Restoring Trust" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

During His ministry, Jesus had kept constantly before the disciples the fact that they were to be one with Him in His work for the recovery of the world from the slavery of sin. When He sent forth the Twelve and afterward the Seventy, to proclaim the kingdom of God, He was teaching them their duty to impart to others what He had made known to them. In all His work He was training them for individual labor, to be extended as their numbers increased, and eventually to reach to the uttermost parts of the earth. The last lesson He gave His followers was that they held in trust for the world the glad tidings of salvation. {AA 32.1}

God has recorded many narratives in His Inspired Word to teach us that the human family is the object of the special care of heavenly angels. Man is not left to become the sport of Satan's temptations. All heaven is actively engaged in the work of communicating light to the inhabitants of the world, that they may not be left without spiritual guidance. An eye that never slumbers nor sleeps is guarding the camp of Israel. Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels are ministering to the needs of the children of men. Voices inspired by God are crying, This is the way, walk ye in it. If men will hear the voice of warning, if they will trust to God's guidance and not to finite judgment, they will be safe.... {HP 103.2}

In all ages God has given human beings divine revelations, that thus He may fulfill His purpose of unfolding gradually to the mind the doctrines of grace. His manner of imparting the truth is illustrated by the words, "His going forth is prepared as the morning." He who places himself where God can enlighten him, advances, as it were, from the partial obscurity of dawn to the full radiance of noonday. {ML 109.4}

As we contemplate the great things of God's word, we look into a fountain that broadens and deepens beneath our gaze. Its breadth and depth pass our knowledge. As we gaze, the vision widens; stretched out before us we behold a boundless, shoreless sea. {Ed 171.2}

Such study has vivifying power. The mind and heart acquire new strength, new life. {Ed 171.3}

God is the author of truth. He enlightens the darkened understanding and gives to the human mind power to grasp and comprehend the truths which He has revealed. {SL 49.1}

The Bible is full of knowledge, and all who come to its study with a heart to understand, will find the mind enlarged and the faculties strengthened to comprehend these precious, far-reaching truths. The Holy Spirit will impress them upon the mind and soul. {FE 449.2}

The Lord did not lock the reservoir of heaven after pouring His Spirit upon the early disciples. We, also, may receive of the fullness of His blessing. Heaven is full of the treasures of His grace, and those who come to God in faith may claim all that He has promised. (RH June 4, 1889). {3BC 1152.4}

The same Spirit that in His stead was sent to be the instructor of His first co-workers, Christ has commissioned to be the instructor of His co-workers today. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20), is His promise. {Ed 96.1}

Through the visible ascension of Christ all their views and contemplation of heaven are changed. Their minds had formerly dwelt upon it as a region of unlimited space, tenanted by spirits without substance. Now heaven was connected with the thought of Jesus, whom they had loved and revered above all others, with whom they had conversed and journeyed, whom they had handled, even in His resurrected body, who had spoken hope and comfort to their hearts, and who, while the words were upon His lips, had been taken up before their eyes,

the tones of His voice coming back to them as the cloudy chariot of angels received Him: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” {6BC 1054.3}

Heaven could no longer appear to them as an indefinite, incomprehensible space, filled with intangible spirits. They now looked upon it as their future home, where mansions were being prepared for them by their loving Redeemer. Prayer was clothed with a new interest, since it was a communion with their Saviour. With new and thrilling emotions and a firm confidence that their prayer would be answered, they gathered in the upper chamber to offer their petitions and to claim the promise of the Saviour, who had said, “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” They prayed in the name of Jesus. {6BC 1054.4}

They had a gospel to preach—Christ in human form, a man of sorrows; Christ in humiliation, taken by wicked hands and crucified; Christ resurrected, and ascended to heaven, into the presence of God, to be man’s Advocate; Christ to come again with power and great glory in the clouds of heaven (3SP 262, 263). {6BC 1054.5}

To those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance, angels of God draw near. The Holy Spirit is given to open to them the rich treasures of the truth. {COL 59.3}

We all have many difficulties to meet, many perplexing problems to solve. But we have an all-powerful Helper, who will listen to our requests as willingly and gladly as He listened to the requests of those who, when He was on this earth in person, came to Him for help. . . . {HP 124.2}

By maintaining a connection with God, we shall be enabled to diffuse to others, through our association with them, the light, the peace, the serenity, that rule in our hearts. The strength acquired in prayer to God, united with persevering effort in training the mind in thoughtfulness and care-taking, prepares one for daily duties and keeps the spirit in peace under all circumstances. {MB 85.2}

To us today, as verily as to the first disciples, the promise of the Spirit belongs. God will today endow men and women with power from above, as He endowed those who on the day of Pentecost heard the word of salvation. At this very hour His Spirit and His grace are for all who need them and will take Him at His word.—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 20. {ChS 250.1}

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 40. {ChS 250.2}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and

purify our hearts. . . . There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. . . . Christ declared that the divine influence of the Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. {ML 37.4}

Divine wisdom will order the steps of those who put their trust in the Lord. Divine love will encircle them, and they will realize the presence of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. {OHC 324.6}

The Holy Spirit was sent as the most priceless treasure man could receive. {ML 36.5}

The Holy Spirit imparts love, joy, peace, strength, and consolation; it is as a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. The blessing is free to all. {FLB 53.7}

These scenes are to be repeated, and with greater power. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the former rain, but the latter rain will be more abundant. The Spirit awaits our demand and reception. Christ is again to be revealed in His fulness by the Holy Spirit's power. {COL 121.1}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. {8T 19.1}

God has given to each of his messengers his distinctive work; and, while there is a diversity of gifts, all are to blend harmoniously in carrying forward the great work of salvation. They are only instruments of divine grace and power. {8Red 74.1}

In all the Lord's arrangements, there is nothing more beautiful than His plan of giving to men and women a diversity of gifts. The church is His garden, adorned with a variety of trees, plants, and flowers. He does not expect the hyssop to assume the proportions of the cedar, nor the olive to reach the height of the stately palm. Many have received but a limited religious and intellectual training, but God has a work for this class to do if they will labor in humility, trusting in Him.—Letter 122, 1902. {Ev 98.3}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*
Lesson 7 “Mission to My Neighbor”

Read for this week's study

Luke 10:25–37; 2 Timothy 3:16; James 2:17–22; Matthew 22:37–40; Galatians 5:14; Micah 6:6–8.

Memory Text

“He answered, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” (Luke 10:27, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Question of Questions
- III. Jesus' Method and Response
- IV. To Inherit Eternal Life
- V. Loving Others as We Love Ourselves
- VI. The Good Samaritan Story Today
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Is it possible to have a deeper relationship with God than you have with other human beings? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
2. Read Luke 10:25. What relationship is there between the lawyer's desire to “test” Jesus and the question he chose to ask? Read 1 Corinthians 15:30-32. What point was Paul making about eternal life? What does that have to do with the lawyer's question in Luke 10? (Sunday's Lesson)
3. Read Luke 10:26. If Jesus is the living Word of God, why does He so often point His questioners to the Bible? What view of the Bible does Jesus imply here? How should we respond to questions about our faith that come from a potentially hostile source? How do you approach a spiritual conversation with people who don't take the Bible seriously? (Monday's Lesson)

4. Read Luke 10:27-29. How does the lawyer answer his own question? Why does the lawyer respond to Jesus' affirmation with another question? Read James 2:17-22. How does this passage parallel what Jesus said to the lawyer? Is there some way that we can learn how to care more for others? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Matthew 22:37-40. How does Jesus' own expression of the principle of love compare with that of the lawyer in Luke 10? What key to the interpretation of the Bible does Jesus offer in Matthew? How does Paul in Galatians 5:14 express these principles? What is the Old Testament equivalent of the principles Jesus and Paul articulate (Micah 6:6-8)? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read the whole context of the Good Samaritan story (Luke 10:25-37). If the lawyer was testing Jesus, why did he ask this particular question? What could have been the hostile intent? What is the back story of the hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. Begin praying daily for someone who is different from you or even someone you don't personally like. (Thursday's Lesson)
8. List at least three names of acquaintances not of your faith. Identify their emotional, physical, and social needs. Consider how you can personally minister to those needs. (Thursday's Lesson)
9. How can we learn to distinguish between acts of service done to earn salvation and acts of service that reveal a salvation that we already have in Jesus? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

There are more of course, but these three focuses or purposes of the Sabbath answer the three great questions that have stood in the minds of thinking people—the three great quests of philosophy. Where have we come from? Why are we here? And where do we go after we die?

But mankind has paid a heavy price for neglecting the Sabbath or substituting another day. For without the Sabbath to provide the answers to the three great questions of life, other solutions have been substituted. Where have we come from? Without the seventh-day Sabbath to remind us that in the beginning Christ created us, room has been left for the substitution of the theory of the evolutionary origin of the human race. Or as others say more scientifically, we don't know where we've come from.

Why are we here? How do we attain to the greatest good in life? Without the seventh-day Sabbath to remind us that righteousness and salvation come by faith in Jesus Christ, room has been left for the substitution of the fundamental error of righteousness by works. Or as others have said more carelessly, we don't know why we're here. So let's eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die!

And where do we go after we die? Without the seventh-day Sabbath to point forward to the second coming, to the rewards of faith and the results of sin, room has been left for the substitution of the belief in the natural immortality of the soul. Or as others prefer to say, we don't know where we go after we die. So again, let's eat, drink and be merry.

Incidentally, those three substitute answers; aren't they almost universally held? And not just in Christianity. Belief in the natural immortality of the soul is shared by almost everybody. The idea that salvation comes by works; Ellen White states that is the fundamental error of every false religious system, salvation by works. There are all kinds of substitute explanations as to where we came from that put God in a bad light, or that make of no effect the plan of salvation. But all three of these substitutions wipe out all the significance of the plan of salvation. This is why the seventh-day Sabbath is so vital a part of God's last message to the world. The main difference between the many religions in the world and true Christianity lies in the answers to these three great quests. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Faith, Righteousness and Salvation, #13, "Faith and the seventh-day Sabbath", recorded April 3, 1975, Lynwood, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/13MMFRS> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMFRS> (Part 2)

Is faith a gift of God? Is that why some have faith and some don't? He's given it to some and not to others? If God gives faith, why do some have it and some don't? And does he give more to some than to others? Does he practice favoritism here? Can faith actually be given? You say to God, "I don't trust you. I think you're an absolutely untrustworthy liar as the devil has said, but I wish I trusted you and thought you told the truth. I'm praying that when I wake up in the morning I will trust you and not think you're a liar anymore."

You hop into bed, wake up in the morning, you love, trust, and admire God, you now know he tells the truth. Would you trust that? Can God give us faith as an outright gift? And yet, if God had not given us the capacity to reason and to weigh evidence and to discern between the true and the false, if God had not given us the capacity to make decisions and commitments, if God had not given us the revelation of the truth about himself at such cost, if God did not preserve us from the enemy who would destroy us and confuse us and take away our chance to weigh the evidence, in fact, if God has not done all that he has done would there be any chance that we could see him as he is and trust him? In fact, who even instructs us and works with us and persuades us, and tries to lead us to truth and conviction? Aren't all these things the work of God and the work of the Holy Spirit? Is there anything, though, that God doesn't do in the matter of faith? Does he also cast our vote? Does God not only bring the evidence but also force our vote? If God has forced our vote, then he's won the Great Controversy by stuffing the

ballot box, hasn't he? He really hasn't won our vote. As Ellen White says repeatedly, our vote is offered in the highest sense of freedom. The vote is ours.

So God gives us every opportunity to have faith, but the decision to trust it is left with us. And many religions don't like that. They don't want anything left with us. But if it isn't left with us, how are we held accountable in the judgment? Are we not judged as to whether or not we've chosen to place our faith in the true God?

Isn't that the only thing we're held responsible for? The decision is ours, or else our trust in God would mean nothing to him, would it? If he had manipulated us so that we trusted him, I mean, if our wives said they loved us because we had manipulated them, we'd be talking back to ourselves. Does God just want to hear himself talking back, "I love you God"? Or does he want to hear us say in the highest sense of freedom, "We do love and trust you, that's our choice." Hasn't he paid a heavy price to preserve our freedom to cast our own vote in the Great Controversy? And to love him because we've decided he's lovable and trustworthy. And I think it's so cruel of many religions to suggest that even faith is not our decision. God does all of that. Yes, he brings everything to us. Without him there would be no chance to exercise faith. But the decision, the vote is ours, and for that we're held responsible.

In fact, Ellen White says if the Holy Spirit should be poured out on you with a hundred-fold greater intensity, it would not make of you a Christian. (MB 142) The Spirit only leads to truth, leads us to conviction, but at the same time preserves our freedom to vote no. So when it says faith is a gift of God, I think we have to reserve that one act that is assigned to us—the decision whether we're going to respond to the evidence with trust or with rebellion and distrust. Why all the costly revelation these thousands of years and all the records of scripture that we might have the evidence, if God is the one who places faith in our hearts anyway whether we have evidence or not? If God just says, "Now you don't trust me, now you do" why do you need any evidence? The fact that God has been such a teacher and has brought us so much evidence is clear support that he'll bring us every opportunity; he'll preserve our lives to give us those moments of freedom when we cast our vote. But casting that vote is our privilege, our responsibility; he's created us capable of voting, and holds us responsible for the vote that we cast. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 12, recorded January 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/23MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/24MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

There are no shortcuts to trust, or the Bible would be a much briefer book. Claims prove nothing. The Bible warns about accepting mere claims, and we'll spend some time on that. Even when a person has been falsely accused of being untrustworthy, ***only by the demonstration of***

trustworthiness, over a long period of time, and under a great variety of circumstances, especially difficult ones, can trust be re-established and confirmed.

The Bible records just such a demonstration, all the way from the entrance of sin into the universe, up until the death of Christ on the cross. My understanding is that Christ died to re-establish peace in God's family. The apostle Paul so explained the meaning of the purpose of the cross, and why Jesus had to die, and we'll spend a whole evening on this a little later in our series. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, "The Conflict in God's Family" recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>*

Lou: You talked about faith as a gift. I remember that man who said to Jesus—he was worried about his boy, and he said, "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief." What does God do in a situation like that, to help unbelief?

Graham: I have thought about his cry because this is what he spontaneously said. He obviously did believe, or the wonderful thing wouldn't have been happening that was. He did believe; he just wished he had more faith. Now, whether the man understood how God would increase his faith, it doesn't say. We have to look through the rest of Scripture to see that. And my understanding would be that God can indeed strengthen faith by offering evidence, by helping us to think about it, by protecting us from the adversary who would becloud our minds and deprive us of our freedom to weigh the evidence. The Holy Spirit even moves. I don't mind the Holy Spirit impressing me. It's just when I feel an impression, I want to make sure it's the Holy Spirit, and not what I had for supper. I think a lot of folks think they have been impressed by something, and it's something else. So God in many and various ways would work. Now maybe the man wanted a miracle at the moment. There is no mention that it happened. He already trusted God enough for this to happen. Jesus said, "You already have faith."

Lou: But I hear you saying that God doesn't give us an injection of faith.

Graham: That's the big thing.

Lou: He doesn't pop a pill into our mouth. That it's a process that involves our thinking and our understanding.

Graham: We want shortcuts. I think that's the appeal at the tree, when Eve was told, "Eat this fruit and you will be like God." And she said, "I thought sanctification was the work of a lifetime. And you can do it with one bite?" Well, the sawdust trail approach. Go down to the front, and you will be saved. We are always wanting shortcuts, busy people that we are. Instant salvation is rather attractive. Instant faith. It doesn't come that way. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4 with Lou Venden, "God's Way of Restoring Trust"

recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

It is God's pleasure and will that the blessings bestowed on man shall be given in perfect completeness. He has made provision that every difficulty may be overcome, every want supplied through the Holy Spirit. {7BC 932.5}

In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus gave a picture of Himself and His mission. Man had been deceived, bruised, robbed, and ruined by Satan, and left to perish; but the Saviour had compassion on our helpless condition. He left His glory, to come to our rescue. He found us ready to die, and He undertook our case. He healed our wounds. He covered us with His robe of righteousness. He opened to us a refuge of safety, and made complete provision for us at His own charges. He died to redeem us. Pointing to His own example, He says to His followers, "These things I command you, that ye love one another." "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 15:17; 13:34. {DA 503.6}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

As you engage in this work, you have companions unseen by human eyes. Angels of heaven were beside the Samaritan who cared for the wounded stranger. Angels from the heavenly courts stand by all who do God's service in ministering to their fellow men. And you have the co-operation of Christ Himself. He is the Restorer, and as you work under His supervision, you will see great results. {COL 388.2}

Sanctification is the work, not of a day or of a year, but of a lifetime. . . . {HP 26.3}

Fallen humans, by laying hold of the divine power brought within their reach, can become one with God. Everlasting life is the blessing that Christ came to give to the world. {CTr 32.3}

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes. {7BC 945.7}

The Lord speaks to human beings in imperfect speech, in order that the degenerate senses, the dull, earthly perception, of earthly beings may comprehend His words. Thus is shown God's condescension. He meets fallen human beings where they are. {7BC 946.1}

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. 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 the 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. {CT 462.1}

The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all "given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed have themselves embodied the thought in human language. {LHU 117.4}

The Bible contains a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. {RH, June 11, 1908 par. 4}

All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures. {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}

The Bible with its precious gems of truth was not written for the scholar alone. On the contrary, it was designed for the common people; and the interpretation given by the common people, when aided by the Holy Spirit, accords best with the truth as it is in Jesus. The great truths necessary for salvation are made clear as the noonday, and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God. {5T 331.2}

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. {COL 333.1}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. . . . To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {RC 51.2}

Satan is constantly urging men to accept his principles. Thus he seeks to counterwork the work of God. He is constantly representing the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power he is constantly using against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the result of obedience to right principles. {6T 11.2}

God desires us to reach the standard of perfection made possible for us by the gift of Christ. He calls upon us to make our choice on the right side, to connect with heavenly agencies, to adopt principles that will restore in us the divine image. In His written Word and in the great book of nature He has revealed the principles of life. It is our work to obtain a knowledge of these principles, and by obedience to cooperate with Him in restoring health to the body as well as to the soul. . . . {AG 103.5}

But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience. {SC 60.2}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly

and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

In calling them to His service, God offers them freedom. Obedience to God is liberty from the thralldom of sin, deliverance from human passion and impulse. {TM 247.1}

Where there is not only a belief in God's Word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. {AG 137.5}

While it is true that our busy activities will not in themselves ensure salvation, it is also true that faith which unites us to Christ will stir the soul to activity (MS 16, 1890). {6BC 1111.6}

Genuine faith is followed by love, and love by obedience. All the powers and passions of the converted man are brought under the control of Christ. His Spirit is a renewing power, transforming to the divine image all who will receive it. {5T 219.4}

Many hold faith as an opinion. But saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power. {GW 261.1}

When man surrenders to Christ, the mind is brought under the control of the law, but it is the royal law, which proclaims liberty to every captive. Only by becoming one with Christ can men be made free. Subjection to the will of Christ means restoration to perfect manhood. Sin can triumph only by . . . destroying the liberty of the soul. {FLB 91.3}

We show our faith in God by obeying His commands. Faith is always expressed in words and actions. It produces practical results, for it is a vital element in the life. The life that is molded by faith develops a determination to advance, to go forward, following in the footsteps of Christ. {HP 109.4}

The faith that works by love and purifies the soul produces the fruit of humility, patience, forbearance, long-suffering, peace, joy, and willing obedience. {HP 109.6}

The heavenly intelligences will work with the human agent who seeks with determined faith that perfection of character which will reach out to perfection in action. To everyone engaged in this work Christ says, I am at your right hand to help you. {COL 332.4}

The Lord will not compel men to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; He sets before the human agent good and evil, and makes plain what will be the sure result of following one course or the other. Christ invites us, saying, "Follow Me." But we are never forced to walk in His footsteps. If we do walk in His footsteps, it is the result of deliberate choice. As we see the life and character of Christ, strong desire is awakened to be like Him in character; and we follow on to know the Lord, and to know His goings forth are prepared as the morning. We then begin to realize that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—R. & H., March 31, 1896. {CS 138.1}

Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God's Holy Spirit. {COL 385.1}

Wherever there is union with Christ there is love. Whatever other fruits we may bear, if love be missing, they profit nothing. Love to God and our neighbor is the very essence of our religion. No one can love Christ and not love His children. When we are united to Christ, we have the mind of Christ. Purity and love shine forth in the character, meekness and truth control the life. The very expression of the countenance is changed. {RC 104.2}

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another. {5BC 1141.2}

As you engage in this work you have companions unseen by human eyes. Angels of heaven were beside the Samaritan who cared for the wounded stranger. Angels from the heavenly courts stand by the side of all who do God's service in ministering to their fellow men. And you have the cooperation of Christ Himself. He is the restorer, and as you work under His supervision you will see great results. {HP 295.5}

A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God. {MB 128.3}

The love of God alone can open and expand the heart, and give to love and sympathy a breadth and height that is without measure. Those who love Jesus will love all the children of God. The sense of personal infirmities and imperfections will lead the human agent to look away from self to Christ; and the Saviour's love will break down every cold, Pharisaical barrier, it will banish all harshness and selfishness, and there will be a blending of soul with soul, even with those who are opposite in temperament. {OHC 183.3}

By living to minister for others, man is brought into connection with Christ. The law of service becomes the connecting link which binds us to God and to our fellow men. {COL 326.3}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*

Lesson 8 "Mission to the Needy"

Read for this week's study

Luke 5:17–26; John 5:1–9; Deuteronomy 10:19; Leviticus 23:22; Matthew 25:34–40; John 15:13.

Memory Text

"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me'" (Matthew 25:40, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Faith of Friends
- III. Christ's Method Alone
- IV. Refugees and Immigrants
- V. To Help the Hurting
- VI. Greater Love
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "This week's lesson shows that God has a plan to reach those who might be needy in any number of ways. Their needs might be physical, emotional, financial, or even social: that is, some might be deemed as outcasts from their community or family. Whatever the needs are, we must be ready to do what we can to help. This is a central part of what it means to be a Christian and what mission must include." (Sabbath afternoon)
2. "Jesus' desire is for us to bring our helpless friends to Him." (Sunday's lesson) What are we implying when we say that "we need to lead people to Jesus"? What is it that God does and what are we supposed to do? What is significant about the verse, "When Jesus saw their faith, he said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.'" (Luke 5:20)
3. Why must any meaningful help begin with recognizing people's needs? Why does effective "evangelism" start with listening? What strategy have you found most helpful to "listen" to peoples' needs? What is the difference between perceived needs and real needs?

4. What can we learn from Christ's method of mission (John 5:1-9; Mark 1:23-28; MH 143)? (Monday's lesson) Why are these five steps important?
5. "We generally can't do the kind of miracles that Jesus did." (Monday's lesson) How do you understand this sentence? Is it "Sadly, we generally can't do the kind of miracles that Jesus did"? If we could miraculously solve all people's problems, would that be a permanent solution? Why do you think Jesus increasingly refused to perform miracles as his ministry progressed? Couldn't he miraculously save himself from the final scenes of his life?
6. How can we minister to immigrants and refugees (Deuteronomy 10:19, Psalm 146:9, Romans 12:13, Leviticus 23:22)? (Tuesday's lesson) How can the Adventist family of 22 million help the 71 million people who have been forcibly displaced worldwide?
7. Jesus considered helping hurting people as His life mission (Luke 4:18). What does this teach us about what we, too, in our own sphere, could be doing for those in need around us? What can we learn from Jesus' parable of the last judgment (Matthew 25:34-40)? (Wednesday's lesson).
8. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). How do we apply this principle in our ministry to others? (Thursday's lesson)
9. Jesus' treatment of people came from his conviction that they have immense value because we all are created in God's image. List some ways which help us learn to see people through that prism.
10. The problems of this world are too complex for simple solutions. But the fact that we cannot solve them does not mean we should do nothing. What can we do individually and as a group of believers in our sphere of influence?
11. As part of Jesus' church, how can we safeguard, protect, and maintain the value of every human being regardless of gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnic group, or religion?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Then you remember the experience with the paralytic at the pool. For thirty-eight years he had been trying to get into the water. One Sabbath afternoon he looked up, and the kindest face he had ever seen looked back at him and said, "Would you like to be well?" Jesus didn't lecture the man on the youthful self-indulgence that may have caused his illness in the first place. He simply said, "Would you like to be well? If so, get up, put your mat under your arm and go home." Later, Jesus met him and said, "I suggest you stop sinning, lest something worse befall you." But always in that order—first Jesus made people comfortable. He healed them. Especially sinners who might be despising themselves, He tried to recover their dignity and self-respect. How can you ask a person to act with dignity when you have deprived him of his self-respect? God always first restores this. Later He said to stop sinning, lest something worse

befall you. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #13, “How God Treats His Erring Children” recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/13MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

Angelic agencies, though invisible, are cooperating with visible human agencies, forming a relief association with men. Is there not something stimulating and inspiring in this thought that the human agent stands as the visible instrument to confer the blessings of angelic agencies? As we are thus laborers together with God, the work bears the inscription of the divine. With what joy and delight all heaven looks upon these blended influences, influences which are acknowledged in the heavenly courts! Human agencies are the hands of heavenly instrumentalities, for heavenly angels employ human hands in practical ministry. Their acts of unselfish ministry make them partakers in the success which is a result of the relief offered. This is Heaven’s way of administering saving power. The knowledge and actions of the heavenly order of workers, united with the knowledge and power which are imparted to human agencies, relieve the oppressed and distressed. {ML 305.2}

Human agencies are called to be hand helpers, to work out the knowledge and use the facilities of heavenly angels. By uniting with these powers that are omnipotent, we shall be benefited by their higher education and experience. . . . Such a cooperation will accomplish a work which will give honor and glory and majesty to God. {ML 305.4}

When He sent forth the seventy He commanded them to heal the sick, and next to preach that the kingdom of God had come nigh unto them. Their physical health was to be first cared for, in order that the way might be prepared for their minds to be reached by those truths which the apostles were to preach. {4T 225.1}

The divine commission needs no reform. Christ’s way of presenting truth cannot be improved upon. The Saviour gave the disciples practical lessons, teaching them how to work in such a way as to make souls glad in the truth. He sympathized with the weary, the heavy-laden, the oppressed. He fed the hungry and healed the sick. Constantly He went about doing good. By the good He accomplished, by His loving words and kindly deeds, He interpreted the gospel to men. {CH 498.2}

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man’s necessity. He “took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,” that He might minister to every need of humanity. Matthew 8:17. The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His

mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character. {MH 17.1}

Varied were the circumstances and needs of those who besought His aid, and none who came to Him went away unhelped. From Him flowed a stream of healing power, and in body and mind and soul men were made whole. {MH 17.2}

In every human being, however fallen, He beheld a son of God, one who might be restored to the privilege of His divine relationship.—*Education*, p. 79. (1903) {Ev 55.3}

Christ stood at the head of humanity in the garb of humanity. So full of sympathy and love was His attitude that the poorest was not afraid to come to Him. He was kind to all, easily approached by the most lowly. He went from house to house, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the distressed. . . . He was willing to humble Himself, to deny Himself. He did not seek to distinguish Himself. He was the servant of all. It was His meat and drink to be a comfort and a consolation to others, to gladden the sad and heavy-laden one with whom He daily came in contact. {WM 53.2}

The life of Christ was filled with words and acts of benevolence, sympathy, and love. He was ever attentive to listen to and relieve the woes of those who came to Him. {EW 160.1}

Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. Seek Him as One who desires to be found of you. He desires you not only to touch His garments, but to walk with Him in constant communion. {MH 85.2}

He spoke of God, not as an avenging judge, but as a tender father, and He revealed the image of God as mirrored in Himself. His words were like balm to the wounded spirit. Both by His words and by His works of mercy He was breaking the oppressive power of the old traditions and man-made commandments, and presenting the love of God in its exhaustless fullness. {DA 204.4}

Jesus commenced his work by breaking the power which Satan held over the suffering. He healed those who had suffered by his evil power. He restored the sick to health, healed the lame, and caused them to leap in the gladness of their hearts, and glorify God. He gave sight to the blind, and restored to health by his power those who had been infirm and bound by Satan's cruel power many years. The weak, the trembling, and the desponding, he comforted with gracious words. He raised the dead to life, and they glorified God for the mighty display of his power. He wrought mightily for all who believed on him. And the feeble, suffering ones whom Satan held in triumph, Jesus wrenched from his grasp, and brought to them by his divine power, soundness of body, and great joy and happiness. {1Red 61.3}

The gospel which He taught was a message of spiritual life and physical restoration. Deliverance from sin and the healing of disease were linked together. {CT 465.2}

The Saviour made each work of healing an occasion for implanting divine principles in the mind and soul. This was the purpose of His work. He imparted earthly blessings, that He might incline the hearts of men to receive the gospel of His grace. {MH 20.1}

Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer. {MH 113.1}

But not to any class is Christ's love restricted. He identifies Himself with every child of humanity. That we might become members of the heavenly family, He became a member of the earthly family. He is the Son of man, and thus a brother to every son and daughter of Adam. His followers are not to feel themselves detached from the perishing world around them. They are a part of the great web of humanity; and Heaven looks upon them as brothers to sinners as well as to saints. The fallen, the erring, and the sinful, Christ's love embraces; and every deed of kindness done to uplift a fallen soul, every act of mercy, is accepted as done to Him. {DA 638.4}

God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal home of the redeemed. {AH 540.3}

The deeds of kindness may have been done in secret, but the result upon the character of the doer cannot be hidden. If we work with wholehearted interest as a follower of Christ, the heart will be in close sympathy with God, and the Spirit of God, moving upon our spirit, will call forth the sacred harmonies of the soul in answer to the divine touch. {MB 83.1}

God's law is the law of love. He has surrounded you with beauty to teach you that you are not placed on earth merely to delve for self, to dig and build, to toil and spin, but to make life bright and joyous and beautiful with the love of Christ—like the flowers, to gladden other lives by the ministry of love. {MB 97.3}

This love must be manifested by God's workers. Love for God and for those for whom Christ has died will do a work that we can scarcely comprehend. {6T 84.3}

Kind words are never lost. Jesus records them as if spoken to Himself. Sow the seeds of kindness, of love, and of tenderness, and they will blossom and bear fruit (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1118.2}

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace and humility, love and truth. {OHC 366.4}

What a wonderful reverence for human life Jesus expressed in His life mission! He stood not among the people as a king, demanding attention, reverence, service, but as one who wished to

serve, to uplift humanity. He said He had not come to be ministered unto but to minister. . . .
{OHC 176.3}

He spoke a word of sympathy here and a word there as He saw men weary and compelled to bear heavy burdens. He shared their burdens and repeated to them the lessons He had learned from nature, of the love, the kindness, the goodness of God. He sought to inspire with hope the most rough and unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as children of God. . . . Jesus sat an honored guest at the table of the publicans, by His sympathy and social kindness showing that He recognized the dignity of humanity; and men longed to become worthy of His confidence. Upon their thirsty souls His words fell with blessed, life-giving power. New impulses were awakened, and the possibility of a new life opened to these outcasts of society. {HP 181.3}

His [Christ's] work gave character to His mission, showing that it was of divine appointment. In His every word and act were revealed tender compassion, love, and mercy. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. He always noticed the little children, and they were attracted to Him. {UL 145.3}

To take people right where they are, whatever their position, whatever their condition, and help them in every way possible—this is gospel ministry. . . . Those who are sick in body are nearly always sick in soul, and when the soul is sick, the body is made sick.—MS. 62, 1900.
{MM 238.1}

It should be our aim to bring all the pleasantness possible into our lives, and to do all the kindness possible to those around us. Kind words are never lost. Jesus records them as if spoken to Himself. Sow the seeds of kindness, of love, and of tenderness, and they will blossom and bear fruit. {OHC 293.5}

True courtesy blended with truth and justice makes the life not only useful but beautiful and fragrant. Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm about the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible. In forgetfulness of self, in the light and peace and happiness that he is constantly bestowing on others, he finds true joy. {HP 180.5}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*
Lesson 9 “Mission to the Powerful”

Read for this week's study

Daniel 4; 2 Kings 5:1–19; John 3:1–12; John 7:43–52; Matthew 19:16–22; John 19:38–42.

Memory Text

“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Nebuchadnezzar
- III. Naaman
- IV. Witnessing to the Learned: Nicodemus
- V. Mission to the Rich
- VI. Mission to the Powerful
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “God is as concerned about the salvation of the rich and the powerful as He is for that of the weak and the needy. [...] This week we will explore God's mission to the rich and powerful. Journey with us as we see how God reached some of these people and how He is calling and preparing Seventh-day Adventists to be a witness to them today as well.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. As you read Daniel chapters 1-4, what does this tell us about how God works with one of the world's most powerful men? (Sunday's lesson) How does the progression reveal God's patience and respect for the pace that Nebuchadnezzar can follow?
3. What can we learn from Naaman's story about reaching people for the Lord (2 Kings 5:1–19)? (Monday's lesson) Because changing one's worldview takes time, what can we do to safeguard against pushing people to change too quickly, especially those who come from a non-Christian background or culture?

4. What does the story of Nicodemus reveal about his spiritual needs and how Jesus addressed them (John 3:1–12)? How do the stories in John 7:43–52 and 19:39 show that Jesus worked with Nicodemus at his pace and not somebody else's?
5. Nicodemus (and Joseph of Arimathea) risked their power and position in the inner circle of Jewish society to become agents of justice because they were recipients of grace.
6. Compare and contrast the story of rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 18:18-30) and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). What can we learn from these two stories and why does Luke include them both? (Wednesday's lesson) Why do you think the rich young ruler rejected Jesus and Zacchaeus accepted Him?
7. Why would Joseph of Arimathea, who was afraid that people would know that he was Jesus' disciple, suddenly change with the death of Jesus? (Thursday's lesson) Why is he no longer afraid to lose his privileges or position and does not care what people think of him (see Mark 15:46)?
8. Jesus did not pursue Joseph of Arimathea. What lesson can we learn from this for reaching powerful people? How can we create an environment where these people can be involved in blessing others and fulfilling the needs of other people?
9. At the beginning of the development decades (1960) the world's richest one billion were 30 times richer than the world's poorest one billion. At the end of the development decades (1990) the world's richest one billion were 60 times richer than the poorest one billion. Today the world's eight richest people have the same wealth as the poorest half of the globe's population.
10. You may not think of yourself as rich. But if your annual income is \$1,500, you are among the top 25% in the world. If your annual income is up to \$25,000 you are among the top 10% in the world. And if you earn more than \$50,000 annually, you are in the top 1% in the world.
11. No matter how much or how little you have, the greatest luxury your wealth affords is not the ability to buy – it is the ability to give.
12. "Get involved in something that you care so much about that you want to make it the greatest it can possibly be, not because of what you will get out of it, but just because it can be done." (Jim C. Collins)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And then, one thing that occupies so much space in Deuteronomy, the blessings and the cursings. We will have occasion to discuss these again. Are there not chapters that say if you're good you'll be blessed, if you're bad, you'll be punished? If you're good, you'll be prospered, if you're bad, you'll be poor.

And this was the theology of the three friends who came to Job, for Job was known as the most prosperous man in the area. If you are prosperous, it's because you are blessed. If you are blessed, it's because you're good. So, obviously Job had been a very good man. But when he lost his family and his belongings and his health, he obviously had been very bad, because when you are bad you are not blessed, and when you are not blessed you lose your prosperity.

So they had it all worked out very simply. They came to Job and said, "We don't know what you've done, but we've never seen so wealthy a man now so poor, and you've even lost your health. You've lost everything. You must have done something very, very wicked. Confess it. It says in Deuteronomy if you will confess and come back God will bless you again and you will regain your prosperity." And Job said, "I think you've misunderstood it all. I don't know why this has happened, but you are wrong." "Why," they said, "we've got all the texts in Deuteronomy to prove it!" Of course, Deuteronomy hadn't been written yet. But this was the idea they had, you see, and the whole book of Job discusses this.

Well, doesn't that influence us to this present time? How about in the days of Christ? Jesus said it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to be saved. His own disciples said, "Well, if a rich man cannot be saved, who can?" Because you see, if you're rich, you're blessed. You're blessed because you're good. So if you're rich, you're good. Then if a rich man cannot be saved, that means if a good man cannot be saved; how can a poor man be saved? Because if you're poor, it's because you're not blessed, and you're not blessed because you're bad.

See, they had it all neatly worked out beautifully, just as we sometimes work it out. You see, when the locusts go through, the neighbor's field, you know he hasn't paid his tithe or something like that. Or if a family has an accident, you know there's an Achan in the camp. We're so quick to figure it out. What are we to understand from this? The blessings and the cursings. God is talking to His children there. "Be good and I will reward you. Be bad and I'll have to spank you." Haven't you done that to your children?

But there comes a time when we have to grow up. The book of Job is not a bedtime story, and I have great confidence in bedtime stories. Bedtime stories are for children. In the bedtime story, when a family runs out of food and they pray, they've hardly said "Amen," when someone is knocking on the door with a food basket. That's happened over and over in wonderful ways, as you know. When a family runs out of food and they pray, and they say "Amen", and nobody

knocks on the door, but they still trust God, that's for grownups. And that's the book of Job. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Deuteronomy, recorded November 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/9MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/10MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Now this raises the significant point, how could it be said that **Israel** does not know God? Who else knew God so well? Look at all the prophets, and all their marvelous pictures of God. Jeremiah said, "I'm glad to know God as I do." But the way many people knew God those days was not knowing God in the special, biblical sense. That is, to know God as a friend, to even know God intimately as a husband and a wife know each other. The Bible says, "Adam knew Eve," his wife. And as a result, they didn't learn each other's names. They had a baby!

Elsewhere, God says of Israel, "Thee only have I known." He knew all the rest. But He knew them in a special way. And when those disappointed saints find that they are not acceptable in the kingdom, and they plead, "Lord, Lord. Open unto us." He says, "Go away. I never knew you." Why, He knew the hairs on their head, but He did not know them as friends. And friendship is the very essence of the relationship God wishes to have with His people. If Israel had really **known** God, they would have been better friends. They would have been jealous for His reputation. And they would have been better people themselves, as were the wonderful prophets in the Old Testament who wrote so well of God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #2, "What Went Wrong in God's Universe" recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/2MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

There is no caste with God. He ignores everything of the kind. All souls are of value with Him. Laboring for the salvation of the soul is employment worthy of the highest honor. It matters not what may be the form of our labor, or among what class, whether high or low. In God's sight these distinctions will not affect its true worth. The sincere, earnest, contrite soul, however ignorant, is precious in the sight of the Lord. He places His own signet upon men, judging, not by their rank, not by their wealth, not by their intellectual greatness, but by their oneness with Christ. The unlearned, the outcast, the slave, if he has made the most of his opportunities and privileges, if he has cherished the light given him of God, has done all that is required. The

world may call him ignorant, but God calls him wise and good, and thus his name stands registered in the books of heaven. God will fit him up to do Him honor, not only in heaven, but on the earth.—*Gospel Workers*, p. 332. (1915) {Ev 566.1}

Heaven's plan of salvation is broad enough to embrace the whole world. God longs to breathe into prostrate humanity the breath of life. And He will not permit any soul to be disappointed who is sincere in his longing for something higher and nobler than anything the world can offer. Constantly He is sending His angels to those who, while surrounded by circumstances the most discouraging, pray in faith for some power higher than themselves to take possession of them and bring deliverance and peace. In various ways God will reveal Himself to them and will place them in touch with providences that will establish their confidence in the One who has given Himself a ransom for all, "that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." Psalm 78:7. {PK 377.1}

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. {9T 191.1}

God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image. {DA 294.4}

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. {7BC 947.5}

Sanctification means habitual communion with God (RH March 15, 1906). {7BC 908.16}

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}

The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to co-operate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His

faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them. {AA 532.2}

When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—a changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride (YI Sept. 26, 1901). {4BC 1164.10}

When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the joy of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see, creates a new being in the image of God. {ML 46.3}

The power of the Holy Spirit transforms the entire man. This change constitutes the new birth. {4Red 11.3}

By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. {DA 391.1}

When Christ abides in the heart, the whole nature is transformed. Christ's Spirit, His love, softens the heart, subdues the soul, and raises the thoughts and desires toward God and heaven. {SC 73.1}

Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven. {DA 555.6}

God is love, God is life. It is the prerogative of God to redeem, reconstruct, and restore. . . . The work of Christ is to redeem, to restore, to seek and to save that which was lost. {HP 291.2}

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. {DA 324.1}

The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Saviour, working to rescue souls. {DA 407.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*
Lesson 10 “Mission to the Unreached: Part 1”

Read for this week's study

Acts 17; 1 Corinthians 2:2; Romans 1:18–25.

Memory Text

“ ‘The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands’ ” (Acts 17:24, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Hebrew in Athens
- III. Paul in the Areopagus
- IV. Paul and the Unknown God
- V. Introducing a New God
- VI. Crossing a Line
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Paul could have worked just with the ‘God-fearing’ Gentiles, whose worldview already had undergone substantial change. [...] But, while in Athens, a city famous for its philosophy, Paul sought to reach the people there as well. Many of these had a radically different background and worldview from that of the Hebrews and their sacred history, which formed the foundation of the faith that Paul wanted to teach the Athenians. How did Paul go about seeking to reach these people, and what can we learn from his attempts?” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. How did Paul feel in Athens, a city famous for its analytical thinking, intellectual freedom, democracy and humanism; philosophy and education, culture and myths, but also immorality and paganism (Acts 17:16-21)? (Sunday's lesson) Paul – just as the whole of Christianity – is facing a new historical situation. What should he do? How would his Old Testament heroes approach this? How would Joshua, Gideon or Elijah react?

3. Paul is taken to the Areopagus, a part of the city where legal and religious matters were adjudicated. He does not seem to be facing any kind of legal trial (Acts 17:18-21). (Monday's lesson) Though he can feel some pressure from the group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers ("What is this babblers trying to say?"), they still give him and his "new doctrine" a fair hearing. What does that teach us about the work of the Holy Spirit *around* us?
4. Notice how Paul is able to turn his frustration (17:16) into a compliment (17:22)! (Tuesday's lesson) That requires a mature person who can be constructive, in spite of his emotional distraught state. "The altar to an unknown god" allows Paul to talk about his God so naturally he can introduce God as soon as his third sentence! With all this he effectively communicates to his audience: "I have spent time studying you, thinking about you, I know something about you. I know to whom I am speaking today. I do not use the same old speech for you that I previously prepared for the Jews or for somebody else."
5. How does Paul introduce the new God to the Athenians (17:23-29)? (Wednesday's lesson) How many times does Paul quote the Scripture in his speech? Sure, his speech is steeped in biblical concepts, but he will not directly quote the Scripture even once! He doesn't include any quotations from Moses, the prophets or use any Hebrew terms. How did Paul proclaim the highest God to the Greek philosophers in a way that appealed to their knowledge, understanding and imagination?
6. How does Paul introduce the good news in his speech (17:30-31)? (Thursday's lesson) Paul summed up the whole Gospel in two sentences! He did not speak about sin, repentance, grace, yet all those concepts including the aspect of responsibility and judgement are there. But he said it in a very simple and acceptable manner. The Gospel is all about Jesus. But Paul does not speak about Jesus as a Hebrew rabbi named Jehoshua. He is a "man God has appointed and resurrected from the dead." This is Paul's contextual translation of Jesus for Athens in the 1st century AD. Paul does not even mention Jesus' name (cf. Acts 4:12)!
7. To speak the language of your listeners means more than using their terms. It means to understand the essence of their thinking, their reality, and not only using their vocabulary! The world today does not think in terms of sin, repentance, justification, salvation, or glorification. The world rarely uses those terms at all! (And Paul did not use them either in his speech in Athens.)
8. Paul is willing to think and speak in such a way as to connect with his philosophically and spiritually multifaceted audience. He will use whatever it takes – even quoting pagan Greek poets. Paul discerned as the early church did too – that if we want to succeed in addressing people and fulfilling the mission that we received from Jesus, we need to understand the world in which we are preaching and living.
9. God longs to be introduced in such a way that people can understand Him. God longs for people to connect with Him. If we connect with the people in a new and fresh way, we can be part of that process. If we only stick with what worked in the past, we make it more difficult for God to get through to the people. The Word of

God is still capable of reaching each person of this world in a new and meaningful way. But for that to happen, we need to realize that God's Word has not finished with Gideon, Elijah, nor even with Paul, or EGW! All of us have a role to play in listening, understanding and passing it on.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Well, what do you think of Paul? He devoted himself to evangelism. And he arrives in Athens. And he appears on Mars Hill, and he delivers a very erudite presentation. And he shows that he really knows his Greek. And you'd have to do that in Athens, wouldn't you? So Paul, standing in the middle of the Areopagus, said, "Men of Athens, I perceive," now, which version shall we use? "that in all things ye are most superstitious." One of the fundamental principles one learns in public speaking is, that you do not antagonize your audience in the first sentence if you hope to persuade them later on. And to say they were "very superstitious" in the modern idiom would not be polite. Well, he didn't. What he said in Greek was, "Oh men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are," the longest word in the Greek New Testament, *deisidaimonesterous*. That's all one word and it means "very religious."

That's 17:22. It's a compliment. He didn't insult his audience.

He was very winsome. I mean, this is after Damascus road, remember. "Oh, Athenians," he said, "I see that you are very religious." And then he goes on to explain how very religious they were. He said, "Why, as I passed through your city, I found representations of all the gods I've ever heard of. That's how religious you are. I even found an altar to the unknown god." Now, that's being very, very religious! "Now it so happens that I know this unknown god, and I come to tell you about Him." Now, there's one skillful introduction to a public presentation! He complimented them. He turned their idolatry into a compliment. Isn't that the only way to go? And then he gave this speech, and he quoted the right authors, the philosophers and the poets, and he won a few at the end, didn't he?

But some of them said, 'Well, that's very interesting. We'll give that study and see you here another day.' Which is what often happens after deeply philosophical and theological presentations. And Paul said, "I did win a few, but I don't think that's the best way." Though Ellen White says, look at him meet philosophy with philosophy, logic with logic. She expresses admiration for Paul in this Mars Hill presentation. But good as it was, Paul says, "I'm not going to do it that way again. From now on I'll preach nothing but Christ and Him crucified." And one of the first examples of that will be Romans, next time. What does he mean when he says, "I'll preach Christ and Him crucified?" A narrower message, or a more focused message? Using different methods. He doesn't quote poets and philosophers much anymore. And I just wonder

what this says about our public presentations at the present time. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love. {AA 49.2}

God gives light to those who love light. He imparts truth to those who search for truth as for something of most precious value in order that they may impart light to those who are in the valley and the shadow of death. {TMK 217.5}

Jesus sought an avenue to every heart. By using a variety of illustrations, He not only presented truth in its different phases, but appealed to the different hearers. Their interest was aroused by figures drawn from the surroundings of their daily life. None who listened to the Saviour could feel that they were neglected or forgotten. The humblest, the most sinful, heard in His teaching a voice that spoke to them in sympathy and tenderness. {COL 21.2}

In Christ's parable teaching the same principle is seen as in His own mission to the world. That we might become acquainted with His divine character and life, Christ took our nature and dwelt among us. Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form. Men could learn of the unknown through the known; heavenly things were revealed through the earthly; God was made manifest in the likeness of men. So it was in Christ's

teaching: the unknown was illustrated by the known; divine truths by earthly things with which the people were most familiar. {COL 17.1}

Christ did not deal in abstract theories, but in that which is essential to the development of character, that which will enlarge man's capacity for knowing God, and increase his efficiency to do good. He spoke to men of those truths that relate to the conduct of life, and that take hold upon eternity. {COL 23.1}

Instead of directing the people to study men's theories about God, His word, or His works, He taught them to behold Him, as manifested in His works, in His word, and by His providences. He brought their minds in contact with the mind of the Infinite. {Ed 81.2}

The people "were astonished at His teaching (R.V.), for His word was with power." Luke 4:32. Never before spoke one who had such power to awaken thought, to kindle aspiration, to arouse every capability of body, mind, and soul. {Ed 81.3}

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me." {MH 143.3}

The prince of teachers, He sought access to the people by the pathway of their most familiar associations. He presented the truth in such a way that ever after it was to His hearers intertwined with their most hallowed recollections and sympathies. He taught in a way that made them feel the completeness of His identification with their interests and happiness. His instruction was so direct, His illustrations were so appropriate, His words so sympathetic and cheerful, that His hearers were charmed. The simplicity and earnestness with which He addressed the needy, hallowed every word. {MH 23.1}

Jesus taught by illustrations and parables drawn from nature and from the familiar events of everyday life. . . . In this way He associated natural things with spiritual, linking the things of nature and the life experience of His hearers with the sublime truths of the written word. And whenever afterward their eyes rested on the objects with which He has associated eternal truth, His lessons were repeated. {CT 140.1}

Christ came to preach the gospel to the poor. He reached the people where they were. He brought plain, simple truth to their comprehension. How simple his language! Even the poorest, the unlearned and ignorant, could understand him. Not one needed go to a dictionary to obtain the meaning of the high-sounding titles or words that fell from the lips of the greatest Teacher the world ever knew. While the priests, the rulers, and the expounders of the law were considering themselves as the only teachers of the people, he told these learned rabbis that they were both ignorant of the Scriptures and of the power of God. {RH, July 19, 1887 par. 13}

During His earthly ministry Christ began to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to all mankind. Though He was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of the Jews with regard to this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate at their tables, and taught in their streets. {AA 19.2}

The Saviour longed to unfold to His disciples the truth regarding the breaking down of the “middle wall of partition” between Israel and the other nations—the truth that “the Gentiles should be fellow heirs” with the Jews and “partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” Ephesians 2:14; 3:6. This truth was revealed in part at the time when He rewarded the faith of the centurion at Capernaum, and also when He preached the gospel to the inhabitants of Sychar. Still more plainly was it revealed on the occasion of His visit to Phoenicia, when He healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman. These experiences helped the disciples to understand that among those whom many regarded as unworthy of salvation, there were souls hungering for the light of truth. {AA 19.3}

Thus Christ sought to teach the disciples the truth that in God’s kingdom there are no territorial lines, no caste, no aristocracy; that they must go to all nations, bearing to them the message of a Saviour’s love. {AA 20.1}

The angels of glory find their joy in giving,—giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know. {DA 21.1}

It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. As an educating power the Bible is without a rival. In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. The Bible is the most instructive history that men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and a divine hand has preserved its purity through all the ages. . . . Here the great problems of duty and destiny are unfolded. The curtain that separates the visible from the invisible world is lifted, and we behold the conflict of the opposing forces of good and evil, from the first entrance of sin to the final triumph of righteousness and truth; and all is but a revelation of the character of God. In the reverent contemplation of the truths presented in His word the mind of the student is brought into communion with the infinite mind. Such a study will not only refine and ennoble the character, but it cannot fail to expand and invigorate the mental powers. {PP 596.2}

All things tell of His tender, fatherly care and of His desire to make His children happy. {MH 412.1}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will. {5T 738.1}

So in Israel, man's teaching had been put in the place of God's. Not only the things of nature, but the sacrificial service and the Scriptures themselves—all given to reveal God—were so perverted that they became the means of concealing Him. {COL 18.2}

Christ sought to remove that which obscured the truth. The veil that sin has cast over the face of nature, He came to draw aside, bringing to view the spiritual glory that all things were created to reflect. His words placed the teachings of nature as well as of the Bible in a new aspect, and made them a new revelation. {COL 18.3}

Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. {DA 762.2}

God speaks to us in nature. It is His voice we hear as we gaze upon the beauty and richness of the natural world. We view His glory in the beautiful things His hand has made. We stand and behold His works without a veil between. God has given us these things that in beholding the works of His hands, we may learn of Him. {TDG 241.2}

God has given us these precious things as an expression of His love. The Lord is a lover of the beautiful, and to please and gratify us He has spread before us the beauties of nature, even as an earthly parent seeks to place beautiful things before the children that he loves. The Lord is always pleased to see us happy. Sinful as it is with all its imperfections, the Lord has lavished upon this earth the useful and the beautiful. The beautiful tinted flowers tell of His tenderness and love. They have a language of their own, reminding us of the Giver. {TDG 241.3}

We may look up through nature to nature's God. In the beautiful lofty trees, the shrubs, the flowers, God reveals His character. {TDG 241.4}

The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy beings, all waiting to do His will. Through these messengers He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men. {MH 417.2}

The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing is too small for His attention. {8T 260.1}

There may be some things here that we do not understand. Some things in the Bible may appear to us mysterious, because they are beyond our finite comprehension. But as our Saviour leads us by the living waters, He will make clear to our minds that which was not before clearly understood. {Mar 317.7}

Peace comes with dependence on divine power. As fast as the soul resolves to act in accordance with the light given, the Holy Spirit gives more light and strength. {TM 518.1}

The minds of all who make the Word of God their study will enlarge. Far more than any other study its influence is calculated to increase the powers of comprehension and endow every faculty with a new power. It brings the mind in contact with broad, ennobling principles of truth. It brings all heaven into close connection with human minds, imparting wisdom and knowledge and understanding. {OHC 35.4}

The wisest of his hearers were astonished as they listened to his reasoning. He showed himself familiar with their works of art, their literature, and their religion. {AA 237.2}

The people were carried away with admiration for Paul's earnest and logical presentation of the attributes of the true God – of His creative power and the existence of His overruling providence. {AA 238.1}

Paul's words contain a treasure of knowledge for the church. He was in a position where he might easily have said that which would have irritated his proud listeners and brought himself into difficulty. Had his oration been a direct attack upon their gods and the great men of the city, he would have been in danger of meeting the fate of Socrates. But with a tact born of divine love, he carefully drew their minds away from heathen deities, by revealing to them the true God, who was to them unknown. {AA 241.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*
Lesson 11 “Mission to the Unreached: Part 2”

Read for this week's study

1 Kings 11:1–6; Matthew 4:23–25; Matthew 15:22–28; Mark 7:24–30; Acts 10:34, 35; Matthew 8:10.

Memory Text

“Then Jesus answered and said to her, ‘O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.’ And her daughter was healed from that very hour” (Matthew 15:28, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Mission to Regions Beyond
- III. Seeking the Multitudes
- IV. In Tyre and Sidon
- V. “Send Her Away!”
- VI. Faith on Earth?
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Jesus ministered not only to those in the cities of Israel but to those in foreign regions as well; that is, to those outside of the Jewish nation and the chosen people. This week we will study the Bible story of Christ’s mission to Tyre and Sidon and draw lessons to apply to our lives today.” (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. From reading Judges 3:1–6, 1 Kings 5:1–12, and 1 Kings 11:1–6, it could be easy to conclude that God did not want the Israelites to have anything to do with these pagans. “Yet, despite the history of paganism and idolatry, and their negative influence on the chosen nation, Jesus still brought His disciples to these places. In this way He initiated them in cross-cultural urban mission, confronting their bias and bigotry, and modeled for His followers wholistic urban mission to all cultures and nationalities.” (Sunday’s lesson) What lessons can we learn from these choices in Jesus’ ministry?

3. Two possible ways of addressing relational problems are attack and withdrawal. Both had been practiced by God's people in the Old Testament. How does Jesus balance their understanding of what is God's will for them in this regard?
4. What can we learn about Jesus from his early ministry (Matthew 4:23-25; 9:35-38)? (Monday's lesson) Which regions are included, and which are missing? What does it tell us about God that "when Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them"? What are the lessons for us?
5. Why would Jesus take his disciples to the region of Tyre and Sidon (Matthew 4:25, cf. Jeremiah 29:4-11)? What differences do you see in how the woman was depicted in Matthew 15:22-28 and Mark 7:24-30? (Tuesday's lesson) Why is considering your audience an indispensable factor in reaching them?
6. In her desperation, the Syro-Phoenician woman crosses the boundaries of ethnicity, gender and religion that were not crossed in her day. Yet, Jesus does not say a word. This woman's daughter is suffering terribly, so she appeals to Jesus with humility and reverence, but he acts as if he did not hear her. He responds with apparent silence, indifference, and rejection. And notice that Matthew does not hide this. He deliberately draws our attention to this behavior of Jesus. What can we learn from this? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. The disciples say to Jesus: "Send Her Away!" How does this compare with the attitude of Peter in Acts 10:9-35? How can Holy Spirit help us to overcome our prejudice and biases so that God's mission is finally completed?
8. Jesus commends the faith of this woman (Matt 15:28, cf. 8:26), just as he highlighted other pagan people who expressed their faith (8:10-13). In our world today, how can we see that faith is often found in unexpected places?
9. Robert Putnam says that sociologists distinguish between two kinds of connections: *bonding* and *bridging*. Bonding happens when people who perceive themselves to be similar develop deeper connections; bridging activities involve people who have been separated. Bonding activities usually involve people in the same ethnic group or economic status. Bridging connections, by definition, are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages.
10. Jesus names *exclusion* as sin, though it often passes for virtue, especially in religious circles. The righteous, at that time, believed that the essence of spiritual maturity lay in *excluding* people. Jesus, who was sinless and innocent, nevertheless *embraced* the outcasts. By embracing the outcast, Jesus underscored the sinfulness of the persons and systems that cast them out. How can we be true followers of Jesus and be involved in "bridging" activities or relationships?
11. Often fear, pride, ignorance, or a desire to feel superior is what lies behind excluding people. How can we learn to recognize the existence of those issues? What steps and actions can we take to create a more inclusive community? Where can we see God at work in unexpected places in our time and place?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Let's look first, when he was on the roof there, and he had the dream, and the sheet came down, and the voice from heaven said, "Rise Peter. Kill and eat." What should a man of faith do when heaven tells him to do something? Should he check his bumper sticker to see if it's still there? "God has said it. I believe it. That's all there is to it!" And Peter should have said, "I don't understand it, but I don't have to understand. Who am I to question God's inscrutable ways? Hand me a knife and fork!" But he didn't.

Now, on what authority could he say, "God, I can't do it." Did he not cite scripture, and say, "What you've once said is this; and I don't make sense out of what you are asking now." Does God just say, coming up in Romans next time, "I don't have to make sense; I'm the Potter; I can do whatever I like"? And so the sheet came down again, and again Peter says no. And the third time. Can you imagine the quiver in Peter's voice when he said, "No, I won't do it. And I'm puzzled. I don't know what's going on here." And a knock came on the door. And he went downstairs, and there were some contaminating people. Just a moment before he was about to be contaminated by the creeping things in the sheet, and now he's about to be contaminated by these Gentiles. You see, they treated them about the same. And I think he got the message. "Peter, you're right about the things in the sheet, but you're wrong to treat people created in my image like the things in the sheets." And he got the message, and he went with them. He was right in saying no. As he thought that through, he was prepared to meet those folk at the door.

"Oh! When I think what I've been doing! I've been treating you as if you could contaminate me, just like those things in the sheets." We're going to get into that in Romans and in Corinthians. Paul discusses this a little later. Well, Jesus did in Mark, remember? When you come in from the marketplace, where you've met these Gentiles, unless you wash in a peculiar way, you will not eat. Lots of rules, to avoid contamination. And he went, I'm sure quite uncertain inside, into a new adventure. And he ate with the Gentiles, with Cornelius. And he was enjoying, I'm sure, this breath-taking experience. Until some brethren came down from the General Conference. And he was scared. And he withdrew. You remember? And Saul said, "You cheat! You dissembler!" And he really leaned into him, and he criticized him to his face, and in public. Remember? It's in Galatians. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Man's need for a divine teacher was known in heaven. The pity and sympathy of God were aroused in behalf of human beings, fallen and bound to Satan's chariot car; and when the fullness of time was come, He sent forth His Son. The One appointed in the councils of heaven came to this earth as man's instructor. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world, and to meet the necessities of human nature He took humanity upon Himself. To the astonishment of the heavenly host the eternal Word came to this world as a helpless babe. Fully prepared, He left the royal courts and mysteriously allied Himself with fallen human beings. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14. {CT 259.2}

The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. A lost sheep never finds its way back to the fold of itself. If it is not sought for and saved by the watchful shepherd, it wanders until it perishes. What a representation of the Saviour is this! Unless Jesus, the Good Shepherd, had come to seek and to save the wandering, we should have perished. The Pharisees had taught that none but the Jewish nation would be saved, and they treated all other nationalities with contempt. But Jesus attracted the attention of those that the Pharisees despised, and He treated them with consideration and courtesy. . . . {LHU 212.3}

He came as an expression of the perfect love of God, not to crush, not to judge and condemn, but to heal every weak, defective character, to save men and woman from Satan's power. {MM 20.1}

Evidences of Christ's divine power attended his ministry. He was ever touched with human woe. He was ever watching and waiting to do the works of mercy and righteousness which he came to perform. {1Red 63.1}

Jesus began His work by breaking Satan's power over the suffering. He restored the sick to health, gave sight to the blind, and healed the lame, causing them to leap for joy and to glorify God. He restored to health those who had been infirm and bound by Satan's cruel power many years. With gracious words He comforted the weak, the trembling, and the desponding. The feeble, suffering ones whom Satan held in triumph, Jesus wrenched from his grasp, bringing to them soundness of body and great joy and happiness. He raised the dead to life, and they glorified God for the mighty display of His power. He wrought mightily for all who believed on Him. {EW 159.3}

Caste is hateful to God. He ignores everything of this character. In His sight the souls of all men are of equal value. . . . Without distinction of age, or rank, or nationality, or religious privilege, all are invited to come unto Him and live. {DA 403.3}

Neither life nor death, height nor depth, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; not because we hold Him so firmly, but because He holds us so fast. If our salvation depended on our own efforts, we could not be saved; but it depends on the One who is behind

all the promises. Our grasp on Him may seem feeble, but His love is that of an elder brother; so long as we maintain our union with Him, no one can pluck us out of His hand. {AA 552.2}

Christ invites us to draw near to Him, and promises that He will draw nigh to us. Looking upon Him, we behold the invisible God, who clothed His divinity with humanity in order that through humanity He might shed forth a subdued and softened glory, so that our eyes might be enabled to rest upon Him, and our souls not be extinguished by His undimmed splendor. We behold God through Christ, our Creator and Redeemer. {7BC 925.2}

One of the divine plans for growth is impartation. The Christian is to gain strength by strengthening others. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." This is not merely a promise; it is a divine law, a law by which God designs that the streams of benevolence, like the waters of the great deep, shall be kept in constant circulation, continually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the secret of spiritual growth (ST June 12, 1901). {7BC 947.3}

Christ might, because of our guilt, have moved far from us. But instead of moving farther away from us, He came and dwelt among us, filled with all the fullness of the Godhead, to be one with us, that through His grace we might attain to perfection. {UL 191.2}

The angels of heaven are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. We know not now who they are; it is not yet made manifest who shall overcome, and share the inheritance of the saints in light; but angels of heaven are passing throughout the length and breadth of the earth, seeking to comfort the sorrowing, to protect the imperiled, to win the hearts of men to Christ. Not one is neglected or passed by. God is no respecter of persons, and He has an equal care for all the souls He has created. {DA 639.1}

How carefully the Lord worked to overcome the prejudice against the Gentiles that had been so firmly fixed in Peter's mind by his Jewish training! By the vision of the sheet and its contents He sought to divest the apostle's mind of this prejudice and to teach the important truth that in heaven there is no respect of persons; that Jew and Gentile are alike precious in God's sight; that through Christ the heathen may be made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the gospel. {CC 335.4}

We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love. {DA 297.3}

If He had seen that angels, who are perfect, would have done the work for the fallen race better than men, He would have committed it to them. But instead of this He sent the needed assistance by poor, weak, erring mortals, who, having like infirmities as their fellowmen, are best prepared to help them. {LHU 225.6}

The very angels who when Satan was seeking the supremacy fought the battle in the heavenly courts, and triumphed on the side of God; the very angels who from their exalted position shouted for joy over the creation of our world, and over the creation of our first parents, who were to inhabit the earth . . . are most intensely interested to work in union with the fallen, redeemed race in the development of that power which God gives to help every man who will unite with heavenly intelligences to seek and save human beings who are perishing in their sins. . . . {ML 305.3}

Divine wisdom has appointed, in the plan of salvation, the law of action and reaction, making the work of benevolence, in all its branches, twice blessed. God could have accomplished His object in saving sinners without the help of man, but He knew that man could not be happy without acting a part in the great work of redemption. That man might not lose the blessed results of benevolence, our Redeemer formed the plan of enlisting him as His coworker. —R. & H., March 23, 1897. {CS 346.1}

With the trusting faith of a little child, we are to come to our heavenly Father, telling Him of all our needs. He is always ready to pardon and help. The supply of divine wisdom is inexhaustible, and the Lord encourages us to draw largely from it. {3BC 1146.8}

God is ever seeking to instruct finite men that they may exercise faith in Him and trust themselves wholly in His hands. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us, teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing too small for His attention (GCB Feb. 18, 1897). {3BC 1141.3}

The Christian always has a strong helper in the Lord. The way of the Lord's helping we may not know; but this we do know: He will never fail those who put their trust in Him. {PK 576.1}

The Lord will not disappoint any who put their trust in Him. He will be first and last and best in everything to us. He will be a present help in every time of need. In these last days of service we shall ... be held, and led, and protected, by the power of Christ. {RY 112.1}

Recommended Reading: *Desire of Ages* Chapter 43 – “Barriers Broken Down”

<https://egwwritings.org>

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*
Lesson 12 “Esther and Mordecai”

Read for this week's study

Daniel 1:1–12; Daniel 6:1–9; Esther 2:1–10, 20; Esther 3:1–15; Esther 4:1–14; Esther 9:1–12.

Memory Text

“ ‘I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth’ ”
(Isa. 49:6, NRSV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Captive in Foreign Culture
- III. In a Foreign Court
- IV. Mordecai's Faithful Witness
- V. For Such a Time as This
- VI. The Miracle of Purim
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In its own unique way, the story [of Esther] shows how God's people, even in foreign environments, can witness for truth.” (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. “None of us, for instance, lives in an Adventist country where the principles of our faith are, to some degree, the law of the land. But before being deported, the Jewish people had been living in their own country, where the principles of their faith were also enshrined in the law of the land.” (Sunday's lesson) If you lived in an Adventist country, which aspect of your faith would be easier? Which would be more difficult?
3. What can we learn from biblical accounts about the challenges God's people face living in a foreign culture (Daniel 1:1–12; 3:1–12; 6:1–9)? How do you decide where you draw the line?
4. Monday's lesson discusses why Mordecai would command Esther not to reveal her nationality and faith and when it could be prudent to not be overt about our faith (Esther 2:10, 20). Is that the biggest ethical dilemma of the book for you?

5. Tuesday's lesson assumes that the reason Mordecai did not bow down to Haman is because bowing down to a person is a terrible sin, like idolatry. Thus, Mordecai becomes a "faithful witness" and a hero who saves (with Esther's help) the nation (cf. 3:4). And the reason for his persecution (cf. 3:8), and the persecution of his whole nation, is because he is different, which is then connected with Revelation 13. Are there any other reasons why Mordecai would refuse to bow down (Genesis 18:2; 48:12; 50:18; 39:10)?
6. Wednesday's lesson quotes Mordecai's famous words: "Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" "Though the Jews acted in their own behalf, prayer was central to their response. What obvious lesson can we take from this?"
7. Thursday's lesson concludes the study by focusing on God's deliverance of Jews, even though God's name does not appear in the book of Esther. " 'Many people of other nationalities became Jews' (Esther 8:17). This is a great example of how the Lord was able to work to bring lost souls to a knowledge of Him."
8. Before we conclude the quarter on mission, we should speak about shadow mission. Your shadow mission is your calling which gets hijacked by our ego and/or our past wounds. Something which is dark or selfish. Vashti has courage to challenge the shadow mission of Ahasuerus and Mordecai challenges the shadow missions of Haman and Esther. Haman will not challenge the shadow mission of Ahasuerus and Zeresh will not challenge Haman, to their own detriment. What is your shadow mission? Who is Mordecai in your life? Who loves you enough to challenge you when you are ready to settle for your shadow mission?
9. How do we read the book of Esther after the Holocaust? Can the persecuted again become persecutors? How do changing circumstances change the struggles we experience and the ethical issues we perceive? What challenges do we need to deal with in the 21st century that Adventist pioneers or Esther did not have to?
10. "Time and time again the temptation came to Jesus from many directions to choose some less costly way of fulfilling His calling than the way of suffering and death. But He resisted it." (F. F. Bruce) Jesus faced the temptation to be the Messiah without hunger, without pain and without opposition. But to the end, He resisted His shadow mission to wear a crown without the cross.
11. "It just so happened that..." God's presence is ambiguous in the book, just as in our lives. Most of the time, we experience God indirectly through fortuitous coincidences, rather than through miracles and direct speech.
12. Just like in the book of Esther, God is still at work. God is at work for you and for our community. And because God is at work for you, there is no need to get seduced by a shadow mission! In retrospect, where in your life do you see God at work? Our lives, and our missions are part of a much bigger mission that is continuing behind the scenes. We just need a larger perspective on what God is doing.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now, as we look at the story of Esther, do you see anything about God that is important to know? He has been accused of being arbitrary, vengeful, exacting, unforgiving and severe. What do you think of God's treatment of those who didn't care enough to go home to Palestine? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Esther and Job, recorded January 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/25MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/26MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

These things were not written merely that we might read and wonder, but that the same faith which wrought in God's servants of old might work in us. In no less marked a manner than He wrought then will He work now wherever there are hearts of faith to be channels of His power. {CG 43.1}

In giving light to His people anciently, God did not work exclusively through any one class. Daniel was a prince of Judah. Isaiah also was of the royal line. David was a shepherd boy, Amos a herdsman, Zechariah a captive from Babylon, Elisha a tiller of the soil. The Lord raised up as His representatives prophets and princes, the noble and the lowly, and taught them the truths to be given to the world. {MH 148.1}

Daniel and his companions were captives in a strange land, but God suffered not the envy and hatred of their enemies to prevail against them. The righteous have ever obtained help from above. How often have the enemies of God united their strength and wisdom to destroy the character and influence of a few simple persons who trusted in God. But because the Lord was for them, none could prevail against them. {2T 139.2}

As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a "God of gods," able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him. {PK 513.1}

Heaven is very near those who suffer for righteousness' sake. Christ identifies His interests with the interests of His faithful people; He suffers in the person of His saints, and whoever touches His chosen ones touches Him. The power that is near to deliver from physical harm or distress is also near to save from the greater evil, making it possible for the servant of God to maintain his integrity under all circumstances, and to triumph through divine grace. {PK 545.3}

As the Lord co-operated with Daniel and his fellows, so He will co-operate with all who strive to do His will. And by the impartation of His Spirit He will strengthen every true purpose, every noble resolution. Those who walk in the path of obedience will encounter many hindrances. Strong, subtle influences may bind them to the world; but the Lord is able to render futile every agency that works for the defeat of His chosen ones; in His strength they may overcome every temptation, conquer every difficulty. {PK 487.1}

God brought Daniel and his associates into connection with the great men of Babylon, that in the midst of a nation of idolaters they might represent His character. How did they become fitted for a position of so great trust and honor? It was faithfulness in little things that gave complexion to their whole life. They honored God in the smallest duties, as well as in the larger responsibilities. {PK 487.2}

Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, "Ye shall receive." {AA 564.1}

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. {DA 668.3}

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}

The revelation of His own glory in the form of humanity will bring heaven so near to men that the beauty adorning the inner temple will be seen in every soul in whom the Saviour dwells. Men will be captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ. . . {COL 420.2}

The humblest and poorest of the disciples of Jesus can be a blessing to others. They may not realize that they are doing any special good, but by their unconscious influence they may start waves of blessings that will widen and deepen, and the blessed results they may never know till the day of final reward. They are not required to weary themselves with anxiety about success.

They have only to go forward quietly, doing faithfully the work God's providence assigns, and their life will not be in vain. Their own souls will be growing more and more into the likeness of Christ; they are workers together with God in this life, and are thus fitting for the higher work and the unshadowed joy of the life to come (*Signs of the Times*, Aug. 6, 1902). {LHU 276.6}

The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants. To him that "walketh righteously" is the promise: "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." Isaiah 33:15, 16; 41:17. {GC 629.2}

We know that in sadness and grief we feel very frail, but we know that Jesus is right by our side to sympathize with us, and He will help us. We can commune with our best Friend; He is right by our side. We need not go into the heavens to bring Him down, for He is right by us to help us. {CTr 42.4}

Press close to Jesus, and place your hand in His, and He will firmly hold your hand, and never let go of the soul who maintains his faith in Him. . . . {UL 42.3}

The precious Saviour will send help just when we need it. . . . The time of trouble is a fearful ordeal for God's people; but it is the time for every true believer to look up, and by faith he may see the bow of promise encircling him. {GC 633.1}

We may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Receiving Christ, we are clothed with power. An indwelling Saviour makes His power our property. . . . Christ's presence in the heart is a vitalizing power, strengthening the entire being. {FLB 62.7}

Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. {FLB 62.8}

As the wheellike complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of this earth. {PK 536.1}

He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His work. He will thwart the purposes of wicked men and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amidst the strife and tumult of nations He guards His

children still. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands. {PK 176.1}

Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness. {SC 96.3}

At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. {DA 669.4}

[T]hose who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people.—GC 511-513, 516, 517. {TA 13.1}

The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, . . . guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction.—ML 171. {TA 16.3}

Angels of God are watching over us. Upon this earth there are thousands and tens of thousands of heavenly messengers commissioned by the Father to prevent Satan from obtaining any advantage over those who refuse to walk in the path of evil. And these angels who guard God's children on earth are in communication with the Father in heaven.—HP 99. {TA 16.4}

You are not alone in the warfare against wrong. Could the curtain be rolled back, you would see heavenly angels fighting with you. This they must do; it is their work to guard the youth. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels minister to the youth.—YI Jan. 1, 1903. {TA 19.2}

All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. {6T 63.3}

Every weak, doubting, struggling soul who yields fully to the Lord is placed in direct touch with agencies that enable him to overcome. Heaven is near to him, and he has the support and help of angels of mercy in every time of trial and need. {AA 299.1}

The cloud that was a wall of darkness to the Egyptians was to the Hebrews a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp, and shedding brightness upon the path before them. So the

dealings of Providence bring to the unbelieving, darkness and despair, while to the trusting soul they are full of light and peace. The path where God leads the way may lie through the desert or the sea, but it is a safe path. {PP 290.3}

But though the conflict is a ceaseless one, none are left to struggle alone. Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him. As His children draw near to Him for protection from evil, in pity and love He lifts up for them a standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands. {PK 570.4}

How graciously and tenderly our heavenly Father deals with His children! He preserves them from a thousand dangers to them unseen and guards them from the subtle arts of Satan, lest they should be destroyed. {3T 373.1}

I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble; and every soul that was decided on the truth and was pure in heart was to be covered with the covering of the Almighty. {EW 43.2}

God has a deep and earnest love for every member of the human family; not one is forgotten, not one is left helpless and deceived to be overcome by the enemy. And if those who have enlisted in the army of Christ will put on the whole armor of God, and wear it, they will be proof against all the assaults of the enemy. Those who really desire to be taught of God, and to walk in His way, have the sure promise that if they feel their lack of wisdom and ask of God, He will give liberally, and upbraid not. {FE 299.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*

Lesson 13 "The End of God's Mission"

Read for this week's study

Revelation 1:1–7; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 14:6–12; Luke 11:23; 1 Timothy 2:4; Revelation 21:1–4.

Memory Text

"Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (2 Peter 3:11, 12, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Revelation: God's Last-Day Mission
- III. The Three Angels' Messages and Mission
- IV. The Final Crisis
- V. Success in Mission
- VI. Mission Complete
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "In this quarter's final lesson, we will see that Revelation is a missionary book focused on a missionary God who is calling us to be a missionary church. Our calling to proclaim 'present truth' to the world will exist right up until everyone has made the choice for or against God." (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. How does the book of Revelation open with God's mission for human beings (Revelation 1:1–7)? (Sunday's lesson) What does it mean that we are "kings and priests"? If all are kings, are we not servants anymore? If all are priests, are we not friends anymore? (John 15:15)
3. How does Revelation 14:6–12 depict God's mission and his last warning message? (Monday's lesson) If God is so powerful that he is going to triumph ultimately, why does this "require the patience of the saints" (14:12)? In what sense is God's mission given from a position of weakness? How is that reflected in the Gospels, Acts, and Pauline theology? And how was that lost in medieval thinking or in the conquest of new mission fields?

4. Why does the gospel need to go to “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6)? (Tuesday’s lesson) Why does every one of these groups of people matter to God?
5. How we define success, determines what we measure. (Wednesday’s lesson) If we measure the wrong things, the results are more detrimental than if we did not measure at all! What are we going to consider success? Because spiritual things are inherently difficult to quantify, most churches never try, or they measure easily quantifiable factors like attendance, donations, or the condition of the facilities.
6. But if believers must demonstrate marks of growing spiritual maturity, success cannot be determined by the number of conversions, baptisms, or total church membership! Developing people to be fully committed followers of Jesus is also a task for the church. Simply achieving conversions does not fulfil the biblical mission. We also need to ask: Is spiritual transformation taking place? Is there personal spiritual nourishment? Is there involvement in ministry for others? Is there an authentic change in the life of the converts?
7. When is the mission complete (Revelation 21:1–4; 22–22:5)? (Thursday’s lesson) John describes the population of the redeemed as a single multitude, yet gathered from, and still individually recognized as part of every tribe, nation, and people! Unlike human empires, the Church cannot homogenize people into uniform ice cubes but must integrate them like diverse snowflakes into a matrix of interlocking social diversity. That’s how the New Jerusalem in Revelation differs from Babel in Genesis.
8. The supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in Christians produces even more diversity than that given by differences of gender (male and female), or ethnic origin (Jew and Gentile), or the cultural human diversity due to differences of socio-economic status (slave and free) [Galatians 3:28]. This enhanced diversity is a result of differences of the various spiritual gifts God gives each of us and ministries in the fellowship of the Church (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4).
9. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit does not produce a “battery farm” of similar clones, but a vast family of precious individuals, each one loved and valued for their uniqueness and the contribution they bring to the community of redeemed.
10. Wherever we try to generate an exclusive “in” group, wherever we define our world as “them versus us”, we are grieving the Holy Spirit and we are not fulfilling our mission as God’s people. Any time we create polarization in church or society, erect walls of separation and foster barriers of division, we cease to be followers of our God. For God in Christ has stepped into our world to demolish all walls of discrimination and prejudice that sin has constructed.
11. In the world to come the immense diversity that characterizes us as humans is not erased – it is preserved and enhanced in a vast multi-cultural, multi-lingual celebration. In heaven and on the renewed earth, we are not all going to be the same. We are all going to be gloriously different! How can we model and foster in our church life here and now this social richness of that future world?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now when we read that first angel's message to "worship the Creator of the heaven and earth, the Creator of the sea and springs," perhaps we are reminded that the first mention of the Sabbath comes in the Bible at the end of creation week. I wonder if tonight we could think back in imagination to the very dramatic events of that first week of this earth's history. The war had begun already in heaven. Satan had already leveled his charges and his accusations. One-third of the angels had already agreed with him that God is not worthy of our love and our trust.

Right in the middle of that devastating crisis, God invites His family to watch Him as He creates yet another world—this time, ours. How easily He could have created our world with a snap of His fingers, in just an instant of time. But in the dramatic and significant setting of the Great Controversy, He chose this time to do it in six twenty-four hour days. On the first day, all He said was, "Let there be light." That's all. And then days two, three, four, five, as God in unhurried majesty and drama unfolded His plans for our earth. By the sixth day, what a beautiful place this was. Where now were Satan's charges that God was selfish?

I mean, look at the freedom. He created us in His own image with power to think and to do. And we know from human history that He created us free to either love and trust Him, or hate Him and spit in His face, because it has been done. And He created us able to do it! {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10, "The Reminder of the Evidence" recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG>*

For example, do we not understand it is our commission to preach the messages in Revelation 14—the three angels' messages? Now what's the third angel's message all about if it isn't about wind, earthquake and fire? How the wicked will be burned in sulfurous flames. Fearsome words! And if we haven't learned why God uses such language, we can't give that third angel's message without having a wrong influence on people. If we preach the third angel's message and lead people to serve God from fear, we've done more harm than good.

Do you know how to preach those awful words of the third angel's message in such a way that they do not contradict the Good News of the first angel, that God does not wish us to serve Him from fear? Can we not draw from the preceding books in scripture and explain when God raises His voice, it's just as a last resort? If He doesn't raise it, He'll have to give us up. But He makes one last attempt to capture our attention and hold it long enough to tell us what He told Elijah. "I don't like raising my voice, but I'm willing to do it to get your attention."

Now, I see all through the Bible, God raising His voice. And how good to find long before Jesus came, right here in Kings, God making it clear He'd rather talk softly. Because when He raises His

voice, we're too quick to say, "All that the Lord has said, we will do." You remember, at the foot of Sinai? "All that the Lord has said, we will do." But when He stopped speaking so loudly, what were they doing in forty days, but dancing drunk around the golden calf? The obedience that springs from fear doesn't last very long, and it even turns us against the One who asks us to obey. The quality of obedience given to someone we're scared of isn't very good. It even irritates and undermines love and respect and can turn us into rebels. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – 1&2 Kings, recorded November 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/17MMPOGIA66> (1 Kings - Part 1)

<http://pkp.cc/18MMPOGIA66> (1 Kings - Part 2)

<http://pkp.cc/19MMPOGIA66> (2 Kings - Part 1)

<http://pkp.cc/20MMPOGIA66> (2 Kings - Part 2)

As he experienced this separation from His Father, "So great was this agony, that His physical pain was hardly felt. With amazement angels witnessed the Savior's despairing agony." Note the words, agony, fear, consternation. He was really tempted to doubt all that He'd been teaching. He even wondered if He'd rise again."

Maybe He was tempted to believe this legal explanation that the second death is, you die and stay dead forever. And if He was going to pay the price for sin, He would have to die, and stay dead forever. He would never rise again. But He didn't come to pay that penalty. He came to answer the questions, and as soon as He had answered them (He did wait over Sabbath, to add more meanings to the Sabbath, so that every Sabbath we'd remember the questions He'd answered on Friday) He arose a great while before it was day, and He hastened to heaven. And He said to Mary, "Don't detain Me! I have to hasten to heaven." And He appeared before His Father, and the angels, and He said, "Was it enough?" To pay the price of sin? "No," they could have said, "You're supposed to stay dead for eternity. You hurry back! We'll not let anybody know You were out." They never said such a thing! They said, "It is more than enough. You've cleared up all our questions. You've confirmed our trust without fear for eternity." And He came back down to see if the twelve had gotten the message, and they were all in a deep depression. It took Him a long time to revive them.

And to this present day, do we really accept what He came to reveal at such infinite cost, that He does not wish to be served from fear. The Father will no more kill us at the end of the millennium than He killed his Son—which leads some to believe that He did kill His Son as He will kill the wicked at the end. How have you worked this out yourself? How did Jesus resolve these

questions on the cross? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: It's part of our problem, then, that we are taking models from our legal system here and trying to apply them to God.

Graham: That's a very good point, very much so.

Lou: The "substitutionary," that comes in, say more about that. The "vicarious."

Graham: Ah. He died in our stead. He died as the substitution. In a way, it's very true. I mean, either He dies or we die. However, that's where the comparison ends, because if God has let you and me and all other sinners die, all it would have done is prove the truthfulness of His warning, "If you sin, you will die." And God could say to the universe, "Was I right? I said sinners would die, and look, they're dead." But the universe would not have had answers to questions two and three that I just mentioned. When Jesus died, there was no doubt in the minds of the universe that God was not killing His Son. They were clear about that. And the death of Christ answers all those three questions. So it's not either us or Him. His death was infinitely more significant than ours. But had He not died, then what else could God do but leave us to reap the consequences and we all would have died. So in a sense, yes, He died in our stead. But beyond that there's no comparison.

Lou: But not as a payoff. It's not one or the other.

Graham: It's not His death is equal to all of ours. His death is infinitely more significant than the death of every sinful man or angel who has ever lived. The death of angels and men would not have answered the questions.

Lou: What you're saying then, is that just a simple satisfaction idea doesn't encompass what's involved at all, does it?

Graham: Oh, it makes it much too small. I think it puts God in a very bad light, and it doesn't answer the questions of the Great Controversy. Many folk who prefer those understandings of the plan of salvation do not understand there has been a universe-wide great controversy over the character and government of God. And do you remember at our first meeting, I brought along the evidence that even Luther, hero of the Christian world that he is, could not conceive of these larger issues because he couldn't include the book of Revelation—let alone Hebrews, James and Jude. And this has been the pattern through the years. Not many have seen the sixty-sixth book picture of a universe-wide controversy over the character and government of God.

And so they have seen the death of Christ as primarily a plan just to save you and me, for which we are very grateful. It's just that the larger view makes the cross much more significant. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, "The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence" recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

In the message to the church at Ephesus, Christ is represented as holding the seven stars in His hand, and walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. He is represented as "walking" among them, thus illustrating His constant diligence in behalf of His church. He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. Nor does He become indifferent. {7BC 956.1}

To human beings, striving for conformity to the divine image, there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen. {HP 148.5}

Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. {FLB 142.2}

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all unto Me." {DA 626.1}

We have one Lord, one faith, one baptism. The gospel of Christ is to reach all classes, all nations, all tongues and people. The influence of the gospel is to unite in one great brotherhood. We have only one Model that we are to imitate in character building, and then we all shall have Christ's mold; we shall be in perfect harmony; nationalities will blend in Jesus Christ, having the same mind, and the same judgment, speaking the same things, and with one mouth glorifying God. This is the work the world's Redeemer is to do for us. If we accept the truth as it is in Jesus, national prejudices and jealousies will be broken down, and the Spirit of truth will blend hearts in one. We will love as brethren; we will esteem others better than ourselves; we will be kind and courteous, meek and lowly, easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits. . . . {OHC 171.2}

God does not force anyone. He leaves all free to choose. But He says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Lord will not write as wise those who cannot distinguish between a tree that bears thorn berries and a tree that bears olives.—*Manuscript 57, 1896 (Manuscript Releases, vol. 18, pp. 361-363).* {CTr 14.6}

Resistance to truth confirms them in iniquity. . . . All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against men or women. He does not make them spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable them to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force them to receive truth. He leaves them free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If people resist evidence that is sufficient to guide their judgment in the right direction and choose evil once, they will do this more readily the second time. The third time they will still more eagerly withdraw from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course they will continue until they are confirmed in evil and believe the lie they have cherished as truth.—*Manuscript 126*, 1901 (*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, pp. 183, 184). {CTr 103.4}

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will, and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8) {HP 346.5}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

I saw that the angels of God are never to control the will. God sets before man life and death. He can have his choice. {EW 221.1}

They [the Pharisees] attributed to satanic agencies the holy power of God, manifested in the works of Christ. Thus the Pharisees sinned against the Holy Ghost. Stubborn, sullen, ironhearted, they determined to close their eyes to all evidence, and thus they committed the unpardonable sin (RH Jan. 18, 1898). {5BC 1092.4}

God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. {GC 36.1}

No one need look upon the sin against the Holy Ghost as something mysterious and indefinable. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of persistent refusal to respond to the invitation to repent (RH June 29, 1897). {5BC 1093.2}

And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise. {GC 678.1}

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love. {GC 678.3}

God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love. {MB 77.2}

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. {PP 33.2}

From age to age the Lord has made known the manner of His working. When a crisis has come, He has revealed Himself, and has interposed to hinder the working out of Satan's plans. With nations, with families, and with individuals, He has often permitted matters to come to a crisis, that His interference might become marked. Then He has made manifest that there is a God in Israel who will maintain His law and vindicate His people. {COL 178.2}

The spirit of liberality is the spirit of heaven. Christ's self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. That man might be saved, He gave all that He had and then gave Himself. {9T 254.2}

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory. {DA 758.2}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758.3}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. Then the prevarications and accusations of him who had once been an exalted angel were seen in their true light.—ST Aug. 27, 1902. {TA 205.1}

God has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. He provides opportunities and opens channels of working. If His people are watching the indications of His providence, and are ready to co-operate with Him, they will see mighty results. {PK 660.3}

Christ has a treasure house full of precious gifts for every soul. {SD 125.5}

In the wilderness of temptation Satan came to Christ as an angel from the courts of God. It was by his words, not by his appearance, that the Saviour recognized the enemy. {HP 350.2}

[T]hose who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people. {GC 517.2}

Through the Holy Spirit, God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. {COL 414.2}

By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go. {MH 182.1}

Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled; for Jesus has promised it. Precious Saviour! His arms are open to receive us, and His great heart of love is waiting to bless us.—*The Review and Herald*, July 1, 1884. {3SM 152.4}

We are sons and daughters of God. Satan is the destroyer and Christ is the restorer. He will make us partakers of His holiness. God does not make light of sin, but He seeks to rescue us from sin. There is not in Jesus Christ harsh, stern repulsiveness or resentment; and if we have the character of Christ we shall have His mold. There is no forcing us to holiness, but . . . He wishes us to imitate His character, to admire Him—true, pure, generous, and loving. . . . {HP 66.3}

In the divine arrangement God does nothing without the cooperation of man. He compels no man's will. {TMK 55.4}

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before

His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God’s grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died,—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, “and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift,— *Immanuel, “God with us.”* {DA 26.3}

And as the years of eternity roll, they will bring richer and more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed beat with a stronger devotion, and they sweep the harps of gold with a firmer hand: and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise. {SR 432.3}

The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. Now we “see through a glass, darkly.” 1 Corinthians 13:12. We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence and gaze upon the glory of His countenance. {SR 432.1}