

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 1 “Some Principles of Prophecy”

Read for this week’s study

Jeremiah 29:23, 24; Psalm 139:1–6; Daniel 12:4; Revelation 22:10; 2 Timothy 3:15–17; Hebrews 4:12.

Memory Text

“ ‘But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the LORD” (Jeremiah 9:24, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Whoever Reads, Let Him Understand
- III. God Wants to Be Understood
- IV. Daniel—Shut Up the Words
- V. Studying the Word
- VI. Figurative or Literal?
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Many Christians take the prophecies of the Bible very literally. For example, they see the locusts of Revelation 9 as Marine helicopters flying into battle in the Middle East today. This assumes that Revelation was not written to be understood in John’s day but only in ours. This would seem to contradict Revelation 1:3, which, in the Greek language, indicates that Revelation was intended to be heard “with understanding.” Seventh-day Adventists take a different approach to Bible prophecy, based on texts like Matthew 5:18, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Luke 24:27 and Revelation 12:7-12. What do you learn from reading these texts? (Introduction to the Quarter)
2. A key element in understanding apocalyptic-style prophecies is to begin by studying the templates of Daniel 2 and 7. Daniel 2 depicts four world empires (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome), followed by the kingdom of God. Daniel 7 portrays

the same empires in the form of four, carnivorous beasts that come up out of the sea. How does Daniel's angel interpreter explain this sequence? Dan 7:17-18.
(Introduction to the Quarter)

3. The lesson notes that for 18 centuries there was widespread agreement on what the prophecies were trying to say. The author quoted 1 Corinthians 1:10 as evidence that it was God's intention that there be such agreement. Do you think that is an appropriate use of this text? That widespread agreement, however, included many failed predictions, such as those of Joachim of Fiore, the radical reformation, and William Miller. How should one interpret unfulfilled prophecies in a way that avoids embarrassment later on? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
4. What do you think God's purpose is in placing texts in the Bible that are so difficult to understand? But in spite of those challenges, what are we invited to do when we study prophecy? Read Matthew 24:15, Revelation 1:3, Matthew 11:29 and Jeremiah 9:23-24. So it would seem that the Bible is clear according to its purpose. What is its purpose? (Sunday's Lesson)
5. According to the Bible, what are some barriers to our understanding of prophecy? Read Isaiah 55:8-9, Psalm 139:1-6, Psalm 147:5, Romans 11:33, and 1 John 3:20. While there is much that we don't know, it is important to follow what we do know. (Monday's Lesson)
6. Read Daniel 12:4. What was God telling Daniel? How do you explain the contrast with Revelation 22:10? (Tuesday's Lesson)
7. Studying the Bible is not unlike a jigsaw puzzle. If you look at only two or three pieces, it is nearly impossible to discern the big picture. If you take a single prophetic text out of its context and apply it to current events, you are almost certain to get it wrong (cf. the Marine helicopters above). When asking today's questions, it is important to study everything the Bible has to say on that subject. (Wednesday's Lesson)
8. A key issue where prophecy is concerned is whether the language of a prophecy is to be taken literally or figuratively. One key to doing that is to see how that word is used throughout the Bible. The lesson invites the reader to compare the following sets of texts to see how the Bible interprets itself. Compare Daniel 7:7 with 7:24; Revelation 1:16 with Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12; and Revelation 12:1 with Ephesians 5:31-32 and Jeremiah 6:2. An important element not mentioned in the lesson is distinguishing allusions from echoes. The book of Revelation is primarily symbolic (Rev 1:1). Why would God speak in symbols rather than be more direct in Scripture? (Thursday's Lesson)
9. What are the best ways to protect ourselves from wild and speculative attempts to interpret biblical prophecies? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

You remember Jonah went to Nineveh, and he announced, forty days, then they will be destroyed; “And I have the Lord’s word on that. My chart is right. Forty days, and you’ll be destroyed.” And when the forty days were up, he went out to see the fulfillment of the prediction, and it didn’t come as he had anticipated. Then he turned to God and said, “I didn’t think you’d go through with that, anyway. That’s why I ran away. But you put so much pressure on me.” And you think of the pressure!

You know, if an evangelist was trying to avoid going to a certain city and he spent a while in the belly of a whale, that’s pressure! And finally, he goes and he gives the message. And then he says, “God, you confuse me. You make me go and deliver the message, and then you don’t come through with it. I’m angry!” And God says, “But aren’t you pleased that the inhabitants of Nineveh have repented?” But Jonah was more concerned about his reputation. As an advent preacher, he’d given a prophecy, and a date. That’s what the charts can sometimes lead us to do. And as you said, the greater concern is that God looked good. And that God did not destroy the inhabitants of Nineveh when they repented made him look very good, and it won some to repentance.

The appeal at the end is so moving in Jonah. “Don’t you care that there are 120,000 people in that city that don’t know right from wrong, and there are even a lot of cattle? Don’t you care, Jonah?” But he didn’t care about God’s reputation. As we study the prophecies here, what do they say about God? Do the prophecies even leave room for delay, by the way? Well, the book of Revelation certainly does. It even speaks of it. “Hold! Do not let these events occur until my servants are sealed in their foreheads.” It’s hard not to get into Revelation when we’re reading Daniel.

As I was reviewing this before coming, it’s significant to me how Jesus commented on the purpose of prophecy. Not just Daniel, of course, but others; but there are so many in Daniel that are so specific. Look at Matthew 24. Jesus himself made some prophecies, and he commented on the purpose of them. Matthew 24:25. You remember they asked how soon he would come. “Well,” he said, “several things will occur before I come.” In fact, verse 23:

Then if anyone says to you, “Lo, here is the Christ!” or “There he is!” do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Lo, I have told you beforehand [suggesting that he had warned them in advance, so they’d be prepared].

But he gave an additional reason in John 13:19. And I think prophecies have these dual purposes, suggesting it does pay to work them out, indeed. There is warning, unless, of course, we misinterpret them and are looking for the wrong thing. So it pays to study carefully. But an additional reason is given in 13:19: “I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does

take place you may believe that I am he.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Daniel, recorded February 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/39MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/40MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them, and admire His handiwork. The heavenly bodies are worthy of contemplation. God has made them for the benefit of man, and as we study His works, angels of God will be by our side to enlighten our minds, and guard them from satanic deception. {4BC 1145.10}

He proposes to be our friend, to walk with us through all the rough pathways of life. He says to us, I am the Lord thy God; walk with me, and I will fill thy path with light. Jesus, the Majesty of Heaven, proposes to elevate to companionship with Himself those who come to Him with their burdens, their weaknesses, and their cares. . . . {OHC 97.4}

His invitation to us is a call to a pure, holy, and happy life—a life of peace and rest, of liberty and love—and to a rich inheritance in the future, immortal life. . . . It is our privilege to have daily a calm, close, happy walk with Jesus. {OHC 97.5}

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}

We can so far comprehend His dealings with us, and the motives by which He is actuated, that we may discern boundless love and mercy united to infinite power. We can understand as much of His purposes as it is for our good to know; and beyond this we must still trust the hand that is omnipotent, the heart that is full of love. {SC 106.1}

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}

The evidence of the truth of God's word is in the word itself. Scripture is the key that unlocks scripture. The deep meaning of the truths of God's word is unfolded to our minds by His Spirit. {8T 157.1}

God wants our minds to expand. He desires to put His grace upon us. We may have a feast of good things every day, for God can open the whole treasure of heaven to us. {Mar 23.3}

The Bible contains a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. It is the book that makes us wise unto salvation. It tells us how to reach the abodes of eternal happiness. It tells us of the love of God as shown in the plan of redemption, imparting the knowledge essential for all—the knowledge of Christ. He is the Sent of God; He is the Author of our salvation. But apart from the Word of God, we could have no knowledge that such a person as the Lord Jesus ever visited our world, nor any knowledge of His divinity, as indicated by His previous existence with the Father. {LHU 130.5}

The Bible is its own interpreter. With beautiful simplicity one portion connects itself with the truth of another portion, until the whole Bible is blended in one harmonious whole. Light flashes forth from one text to illuminate some portion of the Word that has seemed more obscure. {OHC 207.5}

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. {1SM 20.2}

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}

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with; but let us not forget that the three great powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His promises to pass. He will gather from the world a people who will serve Him in righteousness. {8T 254.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 2 “*The Genesis Foundation*”

Read for this week’s study

Isaiah 40:7, 8; Genesis 22:1–13; John 3:16; Revelation 5:5–10; 1 Corinthians 15:15–19; Revelation 12:1–9.

Memory Text

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’ ” (John 1:29, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Principle of “First Mention”
- III. Understanding God’s Love
- IV. Isaac’s Question: Where Is the Lamb?
- V. Dealing With Death
- VI. The Serpent
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The author of the lesson is reversing typical scholarly practice. Instead of studying specific prophecies looking for references to earlier texts, he is starting with Genesis and looking for anticipations later texts, particularly prophetic ones. From your general knowledge of Genesis, what portions of the book do you think lay a foundation for later prophecies of the Bible? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Genesis is like a survey course at the beginning of the Bible. Since Genesis contains the first mention of many concepts, it contains the seeds of many prophetic symbols. The author of the lesson proposes that the first time a concept or symbol is mentioned in the Bible, it establishes a general understanding of the concept or symbol. He calls it “the principle of first mention.” What assumption(s) can you think of that lie behind such a “principle”? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Read Isaiah 40:7-8, Malachi 3:6, and Hebrews 13:8. What prophetic principle could one draw from these texts? How do you integrate texts like these with Jeremiah 18:7-10 and Isaiah 11:15-16? Do you think the details of *The Great Controversy* predictions are more like Malachi or more like Isaiah 11? How would you know ahead of time? (Sunday's Lesson)
4. Popular culture tends to promote an understanding of love that centers on self-fulfillment rather than others. The lesson author argues that the biblical definition of love is grounded in the first mention of "love" in the book of Genesis. Where in Genesis do you think love is first mentioned? How does that first mention impact the definition of love? The first mention of love in the Gospel of John is in 3:16. This is an inner-biblical echo of Genesis 22 and Hebrews 11:19.
5. The Bible's first mention of "lamb" (Heb: *seh*) is also in Genesis 22 (7). Read Genesis 22:7-8, Exodus 12:3-13 and Revelation 5:5-10. In the Passover story, blood identifies those who trust God's instructions. How does that work? The first mention of "lamb" in the Gospel of John is John 1:29-34. Is the Baptist intentionally answering Isaac's question?
6. Death lurks in the background of every human being on earth. It is often said that "Death is just a part of life." That almost makes it sound normal. It is a way to alleviate fear of a non-existent future in the absence of God and an afterlife. A famous poem articulates this kind of philosophy:

Invictus

By William Ernest Henley

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

How would you interpret this authors reaction to death? (Wednesday's Lesson)

7. The early chapters of Genesis include both the first mention of death and also its first occurrence. Death is not a natural part of life, it is the opposite of life, an alien intruder that was never meant to exist. Read Genesis 2:15-17 and 4:8-15. What do these passages tell us about why people die? What do 1 Corinthians 15:16-19 and Revelation 1:18 tell us about the solution for the death problem? (Wednesday's Lesson)

8. Another famous poem brilliantly articulates the biblical position:

Death, be not proud

By John Donne

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me. . . .
One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

How is this perspective different from the previous poem? (Wednesday's Lesson)

9. Read Genesis 3:1-5 and Revelation 12:9. What are some common themes in each account? How does the Revelation passage expand our understanding of what was happening in the Garden? Given that the underlying actors in the great controversy do not change character, how do you explain the rapidly shifting cultural context in today's world? (Thursday's Lesson)
10. How does one balance the desire to learn new things with the importance of staying anchored in the truths already received? How should we respond to new prophetic claims or new interpretations of prophecy? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

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 with Lou Venden, "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>

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)

Further Study with Ellen White

We may not, in this life, be able to explain the meaning of every passage of Scripture; but there are no vital points of practical truth that will be clouded in mystery. When the time shall come, in the providence of God, for the world to be tested upon the truth for that time, minds will be exercised by His Spirit to search the Scriptures, even with fasting and with prayer, until link after link is searched out and united in a perfect chain. Every fact which immediately concerns the salvation of souls will be made so clear that none need err or walk in darkness. {2T 692.1}

Christ was the originator of all the ancient gems of truth. Through the work of the enemy these truths had been displaced. They had been disconnected from their true position and placed in the framework of error. Christ's work was to readjust and establish the precious gems in the framework of truth. The principles of truth that had been given by Himself to bless the world had, through Satan's agency, been buried and had apparently become extinct. Christ rescued them from the rubbish of error, gave them a new, vital force, and commanded them to shine as precious jewels and stand fast forever. Christ Himself could use any of these old truths without borrowing the smallest particle, for He had originated them all. . . . {CTr 225.4}

The heart that is stored with the precious truths of God's Word is fortified against the temptations of Satan, against impure thoughts and unholy actions (*Youth's Instructor*, July 28, 1892). {LHU 130.9}

There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. {RH, December 20, 1892 par. 1}

Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error. Without sincerity there is no true religion, but sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach. The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action.—Letter 12, 1890. {2SM 56.1}

Impressions alone are not a safe guide to duty. The enemy often persuades men to believe that it is God who is guiding them, when in reality they are following only human impulse. {AA 279.2}

We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God. {TM 109.4}

But beware of rejecting that which is truth. The great danger with our people has been that of depending upon men and making flesh their arm. Those who have not been in the habit of searching the Bible for themselves, or weighing evidence, have confidence in the leading men and accept the decisions they make; and thus many will reject the very messages God sends to His people, if these leading brethren do not accept them. {TM 106.4}

Teachers should lead students to think, and clearly to understand the truth for themselves. It is not enough for the teacher to explain or for the student to believe; inquiry must be awakened, and the student must be drawn out to state the truth in his own language, thus making it evident that he sees its force and makes the application. By painstaking effort the vital truths

should thus be impressed upon the mind. This may be a slow process; but it is of more value than rushing over important subjects without due consideration. {6T 154.1}

The words, "A new heart will I give you," mean, A new mind will I give you. This change of heart is always attended by a clear conception of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. The clearness of our views of truth will be proportionate to our understanding of the Word of God. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher grade of intelligence. {RH, November 10, 1904 par. 5}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

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. {DA 25.3}

Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God. It is from the Father's heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men. Jesus, the tender, pitying Saviour, was God "manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16. {SC 12.2}

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}

The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant. So surely as there never was a time when God was not, so surely there never was a moment when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest His grace to humanity. {FLB 76.4}

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}

Looking upon man, God saw his desperate rebellion, and He devised a remedy. Christ was His gift to the world for man's reconciliation. The Son of God was appointed to come to this earth to take humanity and by His own example to be a great educating power among men. His experience in man's behalf was to enable men to resist Satan's power. He came to mold character and to give mental power, to shed abroad the beams of true education, that the true aim of life might not be lost sight of. The sons of men had had a practical knowledge of evil; Christ came to the world to show them that He had planted for them the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. {CT 33.3}

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. {DA 311.2}

The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The risen body of the Saviour, His deportment, the accents of His speech, were all familiar to His followers. In like manner will those who sleep in Jesus rise again. We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love. {FLB 180.3}

Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore." Revelation 1:18. I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Isaiah 54:10. {DA 483.1}

To the believer, death is but a small matter. Christ speaks of it as if it were of little moment. "If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death," "he shall never taste of death." To the Christian, death is but a sleep, a moment of silence and darkness. The life is hid with Christ in God, and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." John 8:51, 52; Colossians 3:4. {DA 787.1}

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}

Ever since the fall of man, Satan has been sowing the seeds of error. It was by a lie that he first gained control over men, and thus he still works to overthrow God's kingdom in the earth and to bring men under his power. A sower from a higher world, Christ came to sow the seeds of truth. He who had stood in the councils of God, who had dwelt in the innermost sanctuary of the Eternal, could bring to men the pure principles of truth. Ever since the fall of man, Christ had been the Revealer of truth to the world. {COL 37.1}

Through long ages God has borne the anguish of beholding the work of evil. He has given the infinite Gift of Calvary, rather than let any be deceived by the misrepresentations of the wicked one, for the tares could not be plucked up without danger of uprooting the precious grain. {UL 77.6}

Satan's position in heaven had been next to the Son of God. He was first among the angels. His power had been debasing, but God could not reveal it in its true light and carry all heaven in harmony with Him in removing him with his evil influences. His power was increasing, but the evil was yet unrecognized. It was a deadly power to the universe, but for the security of the worlds and the government of heaven, it was necessary that it should develop and be revealed in its true light. {1SM 341.4}

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

It was God's purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God's principles. Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe. {DA 759.2}

Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man's uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all. {DA 759.3}

Recommended Reading: *Testimonies for the Church Volume Five* Chapter 90 – “The Character of God Revealed in Christ”, 737-743. <https://egwwritings.org>

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 3 “*Images From Marriage*”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 2:23–25; Ephesians 5:29–32; Ezekiel 16:4–14; Revelation 18:1–4; Genesis 24:1–4; Revelation 19:1–9.

Memory Text

“Then he said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” ‘ And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God’ ” (Revelation 19:9, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. One Flesh
- III. The Beautiful Bride
- IV. Hosea’s Harlot Wife
- V. Isaac and Rebekah
- VI. The Harlot Is Judged
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The Bible is full of love stories that illustrate aspects of God’s love for His people. Marriage also proves to be a “school” in which we can learn important things about God’s love and even about ourselves. What have you learned about God or about yourself from marriage (yours or somebody else’s)? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Genesis 2:23-25. How does one “cleave” to another person for a lifetime? Read Ephesians 5:29-32. In what ways does a human marriage mirror Christ’s bond to humanity? In what way could it be said that Christ is loving Himself when He is loving us? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Matthew 19:3-6. When Jesus quotes Genesis 2, what does He add to what was said there? Why does Jesus seem to disagree with the instructions from Moses (Matt 19:7-8)? The lesson author notes that the intimate pairing of two imperfect

- people, will always give cause for tension. How do you deal with a lifelong, imperfect relationship? (Sunday's Lesson)
4. In Ezekiel 16 God describes the nation of Israel as an abandoned baby, who grows up to be a beautiful woman, so God marries her but she "plays the harlot". Read Ezekiel 16:4-15. What do the details of this story tell us about God's intentions toward us? (Monday's Lesson)
 5. Compare Hosea 1:2, 3:1, Revelation 17:1-2, and Revelation 18:1-4. What is the harlotry mentioned in the passages? What lesson can the church learn from the story of Hosea? In what ways has the church repeated the sins of Israel? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 6. Read Genesis 24:1-4. Why was it important to Abraham that his son not marry "from the daughters of the Canaanites"? Read Genesis 24:57-67. What lesson can we glean about Christ and His church from some details we find in this story? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 7. Read Revelation 19:1-9. The passage celebrates both the end of the harlot and the marriage of the Lamb. How do each of these demonstrate the righteous and loving character of God? Read Revelation 21:1-4. Why would Jesus talk about a city as His bride? (Thursday's Lesson)
 8. The Bible often uses real events (such as literal marriages and specific historical stories) as pointers to future prophetic events. Read John 2:1-11. How does John use this story of an actual wedding in which Jesus participated to prepare the reader for the cross to come? (Friday's Lesson)
 9. In the centuries after the time of Jesus and the apostles, a number of non-biblical practices, such as Sunday-keeping, became widely accepted in the Christian church. Can you think of any other widely held beliefs that have also crept into the church? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: Here's a question that was sparked by last week. "Could you comment on the role of the family and marriage in God's overall plan for us, especially as we are called God's children? Also, is there special significance to our planet in having male and female, the two sexes?"

Graham: Yes, I remember in our conversation on the Sabbath we touched on this. Yes, I think God deliberately designed things this way; the sexes, the family, sharing with us the power to create little people in our own image. Then we know how difficult it is to bring our children up and yet set them free. How can we keep them from hurting themselves when they're little? Anyone who has had children, anyone who has been a teacher of little children, ought to be able to read the Bible very sympathetically. I think God gave this as a very eloquent demonstration. Right there in Eden the family, the sexes, the Sabbath, many things in that

Garden were immediately emergency measures. Some emergency measures can be very pleasant, you know. He did this to say something. {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>*

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

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}

Never are we absent from the mind of God. God is our joy and our salvation. {3SM 338.1}

Our Lord adapts Himself to our special needs. He is a shade on our right hand. He walks close by our side, ready to supply all our necessities. He comes very near to those who are engaged in willing service for Him. He knows every one by name. O what assurances we have of the tender love of Christ (MS 51, 1903). {3BC 1153.8}

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 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}

Remember that God and Christ are interested in you, and that all the host of Heaven are engaged in the work for the salvation of sinners. {SJ 77.8}

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. . . . Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain. {MB 60.3}

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}

Between the school established in Eden at the beginning and the school of the hereafter there lies the whole compass of this world's history—the history of human transgression and suffering, of divine sacrifice, and of victory over death and sin. Not all the conditions of that first school of Eden will be found in the school of the future life. No tree of knowledge of good and evil will afford opportunity for temptation. No tempter is there, no possibility of wrong. Every character has withstood the testing of evil, and none are longer susceptible to its power. . . . Restored to His presence, man will again, as at the beginning, be taught of God. {Mar 363.2}

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 deep necessity of man for a divine teacher was known in heaven. The pity and sympathy of God were exercised in behalf of man, 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 counsels of heaven came to the earth as an instructor. He was no less a being than the Creator of the world, the Son of the Infinite God. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world; and to meet the necessities of humanity, He took on Him human nature. To the astonishment of the heavenly

host, He walked this earth as the Eternal Word. Fully prepared, He left the royal courts to come to a world marred and polluted with sin. Mysteriously He allied Himself to human nature. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” God’s excess of goodness, benevolence, and love was a surprise to the world, of grace which could be realized, but not told. {FE 399.4}

It is Satan’s work to fill men’s hearts with doubt. He leads them to look upon God as a stern judge. He tempts them to sin, and then to regard themselves as too vile to approach their heavenly Father or to excite His pity. The Lord understands all this. Jesus assures His disciples of God’s sympathy for them in their needs and weaknesses. Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father’s heart. {DA 356.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 4 “The Nations: Part 1”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 10:1–12; Genesis 12:1–9; 1 Samuel 8:4–18; Matthew 20:25–28; Revelation 18:1–4.

Memory Text

“ ‘Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed’ ” (Daniel 7:14, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Nimrod and Nineveh
- III. Abraham’s Call
- IV. Given What You Asked For
- V. The Rulers of the Gentiles
- VI. A Light to the Gentiles
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Daniel 7:14. The word “nations” here could also be translated “gentiles” in both Hebrew and Greek. One of the key elements of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation is worldly government, a succession of human attempts to control a planet that rightfully belongs to God. Human experiments in self-government have never worked. Even those expressing the highest ideals have always fallen short. The shortcomings of human governments is one of the main themes of Bible prophecy. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Eden was created as the ideal home for the human race. Once sin entered, God had no choice but to separate humanity from the Garden and the tree of life, at least for a time. Life became much harder for humanity, as the curses on the ground and childbirth took effect. Read Genesis 10:8-12. The rebellious worked on “solutions” to the problems caused by sin, including the building of cities like Ninevah and Babylon.

3. In Jewish understanding, the nations of the world were formed in the aftermath of the Flood, as outlined in Genesis 10 and 11. Abraham was called out of a couple of those nations. God's call to Abraham is directly in the context of the "nations", but also of the Garden of Eden. Read Genesis 12:1-3 and 1:26-28. Do you see any relationship between the call to Abraham and the creation and fall of the human race? Read Exodus 19:5-6. What was God's purpose for Israel? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Deuteronomy 4:5-9. How do you interpret these verses? How would you apply these concepts to our world today? Read Isaiah 19:23-25. How does this passage relate to the others in Tuesday's Lesson? (Monday's Lesson)
5. As originally established, Israel was not to have a human monarch, the way other nation's did. Their monarch from the first was God. So why did the elders of Israel ask for a king? Read 1 Samuel 8:4-18. How did God reason with them? What further safeguards regarding kingship had God already given? Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20. (Tuesday's Lesson)
6. The author of the lessons writes that the nation of Israel served to foreshadow the errors of the church. Do you agree with that? What does Paul have to say about that topic in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4? How does Jesus describe the ideal leadership of the church in Matthew 20:25-28? How do you apply the model of Jesus to real-life power structures? What happened to church governance as the centuries rolled on? Use an internet search to learn why Constantine moved the capital of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople. (Wednesday's Lesson)
7. What was God's intended role for His people in the world? Read Isaiah 49:6 and 60:1-12, comparing with Exodus 19:5-6. How is this applied in the New Testament (Luke 2:29-32 and Acts 13:47)? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. In Babylonian captivity God showed Israel what might have been if they had been faithful. The very head of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, was converted to the true God. The Persian king served as a type of Christ, releasing God's people from Babylon and returning them to the Promised Land. What does it tell us about how God views humanity that He would use rulers outside of Israel to accomplish His goals? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

That is why I like to notice as we read from Genesis to 1 John 3:4 that sin has often been described, and not precisely in John's terminology. Of course we don't translate him correctly. We say, "sin is the transgression of the law", and immediately we think of obedience as obeying the rules, and sin as breaking the rules; and death is the punishment for breaking the rules. Yes, God has talked to us like that. That's the way you talk to children, who are not prepared to act like adults and do what is right because it is right. But on the way to 1 John 3:4, which actually is, "sin is rebelliousness", and shouldn't have been translated the other way in the first place,

you pass Romans 14, “sin is a breach of trust.” Now we’re right back with the angels in the beginning, before they even knew there was a law, there was a violation of trust. That’s where it all started. But now you are talking to adults in those terms. Or James says, “sin is knowing what is right to do and not doing it.”

So, sin is a breach of integrity. It’s a failure to be trustworthy. And now we realize that sin is not some artificial, arbitrary thing, sin is a certain condition of the mind and the heart that makes one unsafe to have around. And God proposes to have this universe free and safe for eternity and He says, “I cannot save sinners, because they cannot be trusted.” And sin is being untrustworthy. Then you ask yourself, “am I trustworthy?” And Paul, who used to look at the rules, now began to look inside himself, and he found he wasn’t doing very well at all. No, he said, “All the good that I would do I don’t do.” Oh, he didn’t break the Sabbath and all the rest, but he realized that the tenth commandment, which says you shouldn’t even want to do what’s wrong, he was violating.

I think that we have been very superficial in our understanding of sin. And that is how so many can look over the ten commandments and say we are God’s chosen people. We keep all ten, especially the fourth. But that is exactly what the Jews could say who nailed Christ to the cross and went home to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. They had eaten nothing forbidden. They paid a double tithe. You name it, they had done it, and they were God’s enemies. {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

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}

Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must meditate upon the truth that has been presented to him. By earnest attention

and prayerful thought he must learn the meaning of the words of truth, and drink deep of the spirit of the holy oracles. {COL 59.5}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures. {COL 60.1}

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}

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}

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}

Their obedience to the law of God would make them marvels of prosperity before the nations of the world. He who could give them wisdom and skill in all cunning work would continue to be their teacher, and would ennoble and elevate them through obedience to His laws. If obedient, they would be preserved from the diseases that afflicted other nations, and would be blessed with vigor of intellect. The glory of God, His majesty and power, were to be revealed in all their prosperity. They were to be a kingdom of priests and princes. God furnished them with every facility for becoming the greatest nation on the earth. {COL 288.3}

Jesus has given us an example in His life of purity and perfect holiness. The most exalted being in heaven, He was the most ready to serve. The most honored, He humbled Himself to minister to those who a short time before had been disputing as to who should be the greatest in His kingdom. {TDG 192.6}

Those who believe in Christ and walk humbly with Him, . . . who watch to see what they can do to help and bless and strengthen the souls of others, cooperate with the angels who minister to

those who shall be heirs of salvation. Jesus gives them grace, and wisdom, and righteousness, making them a blessing to all with whom they are brought in contact. The more humble they are in their own estimation, the more blessings they receive from God, because receiving does not exalt them. They make a right use of their blessings, for they receive to impart. {TDG 356.5}

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}

The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side, as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness, seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression. {1SM 235.1}

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}

Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives. {PK 720.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 5 “The Nations: Part 2”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 2:9–17; Daniel 2:31–35; Isaiah 17:12, 13; Daniel 7:1–3; Romans 3:10–19; Revelation 12:15, 16; Revelation 10:1–11.

Memory Text

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Psalm 46:10, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Very First Commandment
- III. Daniel 2
- IV. Daniel 7
- V. Between Land and Sea
- VI. Prophecy Again
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. It was never God’s intention for either Satan or humanity to fall. The rebellion of Satan, and then of humanity, was a tragedy of immense consequence. This week’s lesson continues the theme of the problems caused by the Fall and the desire for human government as opposed to God’s governance. These truths are powerfully revealed in the book of Daniel. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Genesis 2:9-17. The first use of the root word for “command” in the Bible is in Genesis 2:16. How is it that some knowledge can be forbidden? Isn’t it always useful to experience and to know more? Are there types of knowledge today that we would be better off not knowing? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and other Nineteenth Century thinkers attempted to convince the world that humanity is on a fast track upward. Many people, therefore, exuded a new confidence in human progress. World War I, however, quickly

- shattered those dreams. Humanity has advanced in a technological sense, but certainly not in a moral one. Read Daniel 2:31-35. What is the big picture of this passage in relation to human progress? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Compare Daniel 2:28 with 7:1. What do you draw from this parallel? Read Daniel 7:2. The lesson author suggests that the wind churning up the water represents the continual strife and turmoil among the nations. Do you agree? What biblical evidence could you cite? Read Daniel 7:3. What are the implications of this verse for human governments? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 5. According to the lesson author, "earth" often represents the ordered world or the land of Israel, while the sea refers to the Gentile nations that menace the land, namely Israel. One piece of evidence for this assertion is Revelation 12:15-16. What implications does this have for the interpretation of the land beast in Revelation 13:11? Contrast Revelation 13:11 with 13:1. What do you make of the contrast here between sea and land? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 6. The identification of the land beast with the United States of America was significant to the Adventist pioneers because that was the place where the Advent movement occurred in the context of religious liberty. Read Revelation 10:1-11. What do you think the Adventist pioneers saw in this text that pointed to the Advent movement? (Thursday's Lesson)
 7. What role can the accuracy of Bible prophecy play in the development of trust in God?
 8. In the end, all earthly accomplishments, no matter how grand, will be turned into dust. What impact should that have on our daily decisions today? (Friday's Lesson)
 9. How can we as believers strike a balance between following God and obeying the laws of whatever nation or government we live under?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

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! God even allowed Satan to approach our first parents at The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And He didn’t hide that tree in some dark corner of the garden; He put it right in the middle near the Tree of Life, so that Adam and Eve would see it every time they came to that other tree. Look in Genesis 2:9: “In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” (NIV)

Of course the God we know could be trusted not to allow our first inexperienced parents to be tested more than they were able to resist. You know He would not do that. And so Satan was only allowed to approach them at The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve were warned not to risk a confrontation with their wily foe. Isn’t that the meaning of that famous key text, next on the list, in 1 Corinthians 10:13? “But God keeps his promise [or God can be trusted], and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm.” (GNT)

You see, that tree was not put there as a test of obedience—an arbitrary test of obedience. That tree was put there to help them, to protect them. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was not placed there before sin, but after sin. If it was before sin, it was an arbitrary test. After sin, it was to help them and protect them like every other one of God’s gracious laws. {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>*

Further Study with Ellen White

In His interest for His children, our heavenly Father personally directed their education. Often they were visited by His messengers, the holy angels, and from them received counsel and instruction. Often as they walked in the garden in the cool of the day they heard the voice of God, and face to face held communion with the Eternal. His thoughts toward them were “thoughts of peace, and not of evil.” Jeremiah 29:11. His every purpose was their highest good. {Ed 21.1}

The angels cautioned Eve not to separate from her husband in her employment; for she might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. If separated from each other, they would be in

greater danger than if they were together. The angels charged them to follow closely the instructions which God had given them in reference to the tree of knowledge; for in perfect obedience they were safe, and the foe could then have no power to deceive them. God would not permit Satan to follow the holy pair with continual temptations. He could have access to them only at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 21}

The symbolic representation by which God had revealed to king and people His purpose for the nations of earth, was now to be made to serve for the glorification of human power. Daniel's interpretation was to be rejected and forgotten; truth was to be misinterpreted and misapplied. The symbol designed of Heaven to unfold to the minds of men important events of the future, was to be used to hinder the spread of the knowledge that God desired the world to receive. Thus through the devisings of ambitious men, Satan was seeking to thwart the divine purpose for the human race. The enemy of mankind knew that truth unmixed with error is a power mighty to save; but that when used to exalt self and to further the projects of men, it becomes a power for evil. {PK 505.1}

It was taught by the Jews that before God's love is extended to the sinner, he must first repent. In their view, repentance is a work by which men earn the favor of Heaven. And it was this thought that led the Pharisees to exclaim in astonishment and anger. "This man receiveth sinners." According to their ideas He should permit none to approach Him but those who had repented. But in the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God's seeking after us. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way." Romans 3:11, 12. We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent. {COL 189.1}

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}

Not one cloud has fallen upon the church that God has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork the work of God but He has foreseen. All has taken place as He has predicted through His prophets. He has not left His church in darkness, forsaken, but has traced in prophetic declarations what would occur, and through His providence, acting in its appointed place in the world's history, He has brought about that which His Holy Spirit inspired the prophets to foretell. All His purposes will be fulfilled and established. His law is linked with His throne, and satanic agencies combined with human agencies cannot destroy it. Truth is inspired and guarded by God; it will live, and will succeed, although it may appear at times to be overshadowed. The gospel of Christ is the law exemplified in character. The deceptions practiced against it, every device for vindicating falsehood, every error forged by satanic

agencies, will eventually be eternally broken, and the triumph of truth will be like the appearing of the sun at noonday. The Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth with healing in His wings, and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory. {2SM 108.2}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 6 “Understanding Sacrifice”

Read for this week’s study

Isaiah 1:2–15; Hebrews 10:3–10; Exodus 12:1–11; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Haggai 2:7–9; Isaiah 6:1–5; Revelation 4:7–11.

Memory Text

“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation’ ” (Revelation 5:9, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Futile Sacrifices?
- III. The Blood of Bulls and Goats
- IV. The Passover Lamb
- V. Jesus at the Temple
- VI. For You Created All Things!
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The lesson for this week seeks a fuller understanding of the sacrificial background to the scene in Revelation 4 and 5. We will begin by examining that text and then move to the biblical background in animal sacrifice.
2. Read Revelation 4. What is the key theme of this chapter? What does that theme tell us about God? Read Revelation 5. What would you say are the key words that drive this chapter? Does the Lamb actually join God on His throne (Rev 3:21; 5:5-7)? The chief characters in these two chapters are God, the Lamb, the 24 elders, and angelic figures (four living creatures, angels). What character is strikingly absent from these chapters? What does that tell us about the time when this grand scene takes place? Is there a hint of his presence in Revelation 4:8 and 12:10? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)

3. Compare Isaiah 1:2-15 with Isaiah 56:6-7 and Psalm 51:17. How would you react if someone got up in church and said some things like Isaiah 1:2-15? According to Isaiah 1:16-18, what does God really want from Israel? Why does God accept the sacrifices of foreigners in Isaiah 56:6-7? What do you understand by a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart (Psa 51:17)? Can you think of a time when you were “going through the motions”? How did you break out of that? What did God do to get through to you? (Sunday’s Lesson)
4. Some have criticized the entire concept of sacrifice, considering it to be cruel, harsh, and, in a sense, unfair. How would you respond to these perspectives? (Monday’s Lesson)
5. Read Hebrews 10:1-4. What does this passage have to say about the Old Testament sacrifices? If sinners were not actually saved by them, why offer them at all? (Monday’s Lesson)
6. Read John 1:29. What did John mean by “the Lamb of God”? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
7. Read Haggai 2:7-9. What does it mean that the post-exilic temple would be more glorious than Solomon’s temple? How did that happen? Read Matthew 12:6 and John 2:19-21. What does that say about Jesus? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
8. The lesson for today brings us back to Revelation 4-5, comparing it with Isaiah 6:1-5. Read Isaiah 6:1-5 and Revelation 4:7-11. What elements of these two visions are similar? What order of events do you see in both texts? In Revelation 5:12 Jesus is the lamb that was slain. How does the cross relate to these reactions? (Thursday’s Lesson)
9. Revelation 13 informs us that that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. What do you think that means? (Friday’s Lesson)
10. Why was the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the only way that the human race could be saved? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The people thought, “If we offer these sacrifices, it will somehow appease the anger of God, and He’ll be pleased.” And that’s been even carried down to the sacrifice of Christ, that if we point God to the fact that Jesus died in our stead, maybe His anger will be appeased. That’s the heathen view. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. These sacrifices were not to appease God. They were to say something to us that might lead us to be contrite, to be humble, to realize how serious sin is, and to say, “God, I really need not just to be forgiven, I need to be completely changed. A new heart and a right spirit, and all those things.” If the sacrifice of Jesus doesn’t lead us to that understanding, it does no good. And David was

beginning to understand that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – 2 Samuel, recorded November 1983, 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/15MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/16MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Now, is there a danger that we might leave too many of these very precious phrases and provisions just as phrases and say, “My Bible says without the shedding of blood there’s no remission of sin and I don’t know why. I know God knows why. I just want to know if He’s satisfied because I want to be saved.” Or is it right to reverently ask what does that really mean? Or is it possible that if we settle for the symbols without inquiring for the meaning, we would do exactly what many of the Jews did with the sacrificial system of the Old Testament? Did not that system become a great curse to them because they never asked for the meaning? And they never came to know God. They never thought that when they sacrificed a lamb it represented what we know it did.

Now what if we settle just for the highly symbolic language about the death of Christ and paying the price of sin, and without the shedding of blood there’s no remission of sin, and covered with the righteousness of Christ. Those are interesting phrases, but the meaning is not that clear. Should we settle for the phrases and be grateful that God is satisfied? I want to know what I must do to be saved, believe in all this He says, “These are complications beyond your understanding, but we had some real problems up here. In order for you to be saved I want to tell you we’ve taken care of it.” And I say, “Thank you, God, I believe it and I want to be saved.”

Or do we miss, then, what God paid such a price to reveal? I think He wants us to ask. Hence Ellen White’s wonderful, simple words in *Christ’s Object Lessons*: “Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must [learn the meaning of the words of truth].” Now what’s the meaning? And can we be reverent when we ask the meaning? You used the phrase a while ago. Is there a way in which we could press for the meaning without seeming to be just academic about it? I mean this is life and death to us to find the meaning. What do these things mean? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Hebrews, #4, recorded October 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/7MMHEBREWS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/8MMHEBREWS66> (Part 2)

The purpose of the plan of salvation is to restore that trust, to bring the rebellion to an end, and thus to establish at-one-ment once again in the whole universe. All of God's children are unavoidably involved.

Some seem to find it disappointing, even offensive, to learn that Christ did not die primarily for them. But unless God wins this war and reestablishes peace in his family, our salvation is meaningless. Who would want to live for eternity in a warring universe?

Without this larger understanding of a conflict that has involved the universe, it's hard to understand Paul's explanation that Jesus shed his blood to bring peace, reconciliation, and unity to God's children in heaven as well as on earth. But recognition of the war and its issues helps one to take a larger view of the cross and of the plan of salvation and atonement.

The kind of unity God desires cannot be commanded or produced by force or fear. In the course of human history, many tyrants have tried to maintain unity by terror and brutality. But that kind of at-one-ment does not last. Look at what has happened in a number of countries just in recent years.

The kind of at-one-ment God desires is described in the New Testament as a unity that is "inherent in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God." (Ephesians 4:13, REB) People who love and trust the same Jesus and the same God are naturally attracted to each other. The same truth about God that sets them free from tyranny and fear binds them together in the firmest kind of unity. Friends of a friendly God enjoy at-one-ment with each other.

This is where the meaning of the cross is so important. There can be no friendship and at-one-ment where there is fear. Calvary says there is no need to be afraid of God. When God says, "Be my friend," he's not saying, "Be my friend or I'll punish you severely; I'll even put you to death." You don't talk that way to friends—especially if you want to keep their friendship. And friendship is the whole purpose and meaning of atonement. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 164-165. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<https://speakingwell.wpengine.com/written-materials/servants-or-friends/servants-or-friends-chapter-12>

Further Study with Ellen White

God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him. . . . {SC 43.2}

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}

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. {RH, February 15, 1912 par. 4}

Christ’s atonement includes the whole human family. No one, high or low, rich or poor, free or bond, has been left out of the plan of redemption.—Letter 106, 1900. {7ABC 464.7}

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

We are not to think of God only as a judge, and to forget him as our loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this; for our whole spiritual life will be molded by our conceptions of God’s character. {RH, April 5, 1887 par. 10}

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. 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}

Although Satan has misrepresented God’s purposes, falsified His character, and caused people to look upon God in a false light, yet through the ages God’s love for His earthly children has never ceased. Christ’s work was to reveal the Father as merciful, compassionate, full of goodness and truth. . . . The only begotten Son of God sweeps back the hellish shadow in which Satan has enveloped the Father, and declares, “I and My Father are one; look on Me and behold God.” *Manuscript 25*, 1890 (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, pp. 240-243). {CTr 225.6}

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}

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}

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. {TMK 25.4}

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}

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}

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}

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. . . . But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. {DA 19.2}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 7 “Foundations for Prophecy”

Read for this week’s study

Isaiah 6:6–8; Genesis 3:21–24; Ezekiel 1:4–14; Revelation 4:1–11; Numbers 2:3–25; Isaiah 14:12–14.

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. Here I Am, Send Me
- III. The Two Cherubim
- IV. Like Burning Coals of Fire
- V. God Among His People
- VI. The Fall of Lucifer
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The lesson for this week continues the author’s focus on the vision of the throne in Revelation 4-5 and its predecessors in other parts of Scripture. As noted in last week’s lesson, the centerpiece of Revelation 4 is the throne, which represents God’s right to rule. How would you describe the basis of God’s right to rule the universe? The author argues that God never intended for humanity to fail, but that His character will shine even brighter as a result. Do you agree with that assessment? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Isaiah 6:1-5. Why do you think Isaiah reacted the way he did? Would you have reacted the same way? Read Isaiah 6:6-8. What was the outcome of Isaiah’s encounter with God and why is it important? How critical is such an encounter with God to the way we represent God in the world? Read Revelation 4:6-8. What does Isaiah have to do with John’s vision? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Adam and Eve experienced the painful kind of authenticity in the Garden. Read Genesis 3:21-24. Some people read these verses as arbitrary and punitive actions of God. How should we read this passage from the larger view of God's character and government? Note that these actions are in the immediate context of Genesis 3:15. What are the implications of that? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Ezekiel 1:4-16. What similarities do you see between this passage and the scenes depicted in Isaiah 6:1-6 and Revelation 4:1-11? What do these texts tell us about God? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. During the Exodus, the twelve tribes of Israel camped around the tabernacle with three tribes on each side; east, south, west and north. There was one dominant tribe on each of the four sides. According to Numbers 2 who were these dominant tribes? How does this arrangement anticipate the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21? What does this tell us about God's ultimate purpose for the human race? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:11-17. What led to Lucifer's downfall? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. Read Revelation 14:1-12. How does the contrast between Lucifer's fall and humanity's high position in Christ inform your understanding of what takes place in Revelation 14? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. Imagine standing before God with every flaw, every character defect, every wrong act, every wrong thought, every wrong motive fully exposed before Him! What would your reaction be? How would it get fixed? (Friday's Lesson)
9. John the Baptist, as we have seen, played the role of a seraph, a burning and shining lamp (John 5:35). He was, of course, the forerunner to Christ, heralding Messiah's first appearance. How do God's last-day people hold a similar prophetic role? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: This takes us to a question I think we discussed a bit last week, but perhaps we ought to touch on it again. "If God knew that Lucifer would be such an instigator of trouble upon the human race, why did He create him?" This question baffles many, and a good, understandable answer would settle many people's questioning.

Graham: As I mentioned last week, I never like to limit God. I don't like to limit His foreknowledge. So I like to believe that when God created Lucifer, He knew he would cause the trouble. But God also knew what He would do, and He said, "I'm willing, as I create this magnificent person, it's going to cost me, and I'm willing to pay." And I think that's even more wonderful, that He would go ahead, knowing that he would cause the trouble.

What was the second part of that? Is God then responsible? God has never created anybody imperfect. His creations are perfect. Lucifer had no bent to evil, whatever. He brought that up himself, which does suggest a wonderful thing. God creates us perfect, but part of that is giving us the ability even to rebel. So when we say we love God, it isn't because we're programmed that way, because we can also say, "We hate you." Adam and Eve showed that. When they sinned in the garden they were free to sin.

Lou: So then, Satan didn't go wrong because of some malfunction in the way he was made, like an automobile that has to be recalled. He was perfect.

Graham: He was perfect.

Lou: But with that freedom to make choices, it could lead to all kinds of consequences.

Graham: Yes. But God is in no way responsible. But another wonderful thing about God is that He has paid the price as if it were His fault. You know, He's assumed the responsibility, as if it were His fault. I think it's because freedom means so much to God, He would rather go this costly way, than take some shortcut and program us so we would all behave. Then, when we would line up and say how much we loved Him, He's just listening to a record, or a tape recorder. And that wouldn't please our intelligent God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #2 with Lou Venden, "What Went Wrong In God's Universe" 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/2MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

And he who seeks to give light to others will himself be blessed. "There shall be showers of blessing." "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11:25. God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work. In order to enter into His joy,—the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,—we must participate in His labors for their redemption. {DA 142.2}

God gives to every man his work, and with the imparted commission He gives to His messengers a measure of power proportionate to their faith. He is constantly unfolding to the heart the riches of His grace. Light will shine forth in clear rays from those who receive light from the Word of God. . . . {RC 112.2}

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}

The plan of redemption is not merely a way of escape from the penalty of transgression, but through it the sinner is forgiven his sins, and will be finally received into heaven—not as a forgiven culprit pardoned and released from captivity, yet looked upon with suspicion and not admitted to friendship and trust; but welcomed as a child, and taken back into fullest confidence. {7BC 950.6}

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. {DA 568.3}

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. {FLB 129.2}

It is God's glory to encircle sinful, repentant human beings in the arms of His love, to bind up their wounds, to cleanse them from sin, and to clothe them with the garments of salvation. {PK 668.3}

God is acquainted with every man. Could our eyes be opened we would see that eternal justice is at work in our world. A powerful influence, not under man's control, is working. Man may fancy that he is directing matters, but there are higher than human influences at work. The servants of God know that He is working to counteract Satan's plans. Those who know not God cannot comprehend His movements. There is at work a wheel within a wheel. Apparently the complication of machinery is so intricate that man can see only a complete entanglement. But the divine hand, as seen by the prophet Ezekiel, is placed upon the wheels, and every part moves in complete harmony, each doing its specified work, yet with individual freedom of action (MS 13, 1898). {4BC 1161.3}

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with, but let us not forget that the three great powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His purposes to pass.—Manuscript 118, 1902. {Ev 65.2}

Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best. {MH 417.3}

All earthly powers are under the control of the Infinite One. To the mightiest ruler, to the most cruel oppressor, He says, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." Job 38:11. God's power is

constantly exercised to counteract the agencies of evil; He is ever at work among men, not for their destruction, but for their correction and preservation. {PP 694.1}

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}

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}

The words of God are the wellsprings of life. As you seek unto those living springs you will, through the Holy Spirit, be brought into communion with Christ. Familiar truths will present themselves to your mind in a new aspect, texts of Scripture will burst upon you with a new meaning as a flash of light, you will see the relation of other truths to the work of redemption, and you will know that Christ is leading you, a divine Teacher is at your side. {MB 20.1}

In teaching us to ask every day for what we need—both temporal and spiritual blessings—God has a purpose to accomplish for our good. He would have us realize our dependence upon His constant care, for He is seeking to draw us into communion with Himself. In this communion with Christ, through prayer and the study of the great and precious truths of His word, we shall as hungry souls be fed; as those that thirst, we shall be refreshed at the fountain of life. {MB 113.1}

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. {SC 93.2}

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}

If you ask the help of God, you will not ask in vain. The Lord is at work in many ways to win your hearty confidence. In nothing does He take more delight than to have you unburden, come to Him for light and strength, and He has promised that you shall find rest to your soul. If you will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to hear, and an arm will be reached down to save you. There is a God that hears prayer, and when all other resources fail, He is your refuge, a very present help in time of trouble. . . . {TDG 184.4}

Lucifer was enshrouded with glory as the covering cherub. Yet this angel whom God had created, and entrusted with power, became desirous of being as God. He gained the sympathy of some of his associates by suggesting thoughts of criticism regarding the government of God. This evil seed was scattered in a most seducing manner; and after it had sprung up and taken root in the minds of many, he gathered the ideas that he himself had first implanted in the minds of others, and brought them before the highest order of angels as the thoughts of other minds against the government of God. Thus, by ingenious methods of his own devising, Lucifer introduced rebellion in heaven. {4BC 1143.1}

God desired that a change take place, and that the work of Satan be brought out in its genuine aspect. But the exalted angel standing next to Christ was opposed to the Son of God. The underworking was so subtle that it could not be made to appear before the heavenly host as the thing that it really was; and so there was war in heaven, and Satan was expelled with all who would not stand on the side of loyalty to God's government. The Lord God stood forth as Supreme Ruler. {4BC 1143.2}

This condition of things had existed a long period of time before Satan was unmasked and the evil ones expelled (Letter 162, 1906). {4BC 1143.3}

God in His wisdom permitted Satan to carry forward his work, until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all. Lucifer, as the anointed cherub, had been highly exalted; he was greatly loved by the heavenly beings, and his influence over them was strong. God's government included not only the inhabitants of heaven, but of all the worlds that He had created; and Satan thought that if he could carry the angels of heaven with him in rebellion, he could carry also the other worlds. He had artfully presented his side of the question, employing sophistry and fraud to secure his objects. His power to deceive was very great, and by disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood he had gained an advantage. Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character or see to what his work was leading. {GC 497.1}

It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin, to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin. . . . Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it, is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" (1 John 3:4) it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government. {TMK 15.2}

The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the word of God: "Affliction shall not rise up the second time." Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom. {GC 504.1}

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty. {FLB 70.4}

In the councils of heaven it was decided that principles must be acted upon that would not at once destroy Satan's power; for it was God's purpose to place things upon an eternal basis of security. Time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his government. The heavenly universe must see worked out the principles which Satan declared to be superior to God's principles. God's order must be contrasted with Satan's order. The corrupting principles of Satan's rule must be revealed. The principles of righteousness expressed in God's law must be demonstrated as unchangeable, perfect, eternal.—RH Sept. 7, 1897. {TA 41.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 8 “In the Psalms: Part 1”

Read for this week’s study

Hebrews 9:11–15; Psalm 122; Psalm 15; Psalm 24; Exodus 33:18–23; Psalm 5; Psalm 51:7–15.

Memory Text

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads” (Revelation 14:1, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Our High Priest
- III. On Mount Zion
- IV. Law in Our Hearts
- V. Psalm 5
- VI. Teach Transgressors Your Way
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “One particularly rich source of information for the symbols of Revelation is the book of Psalms, a collection of sacred poetry that explores many human experiences and possible interactions with God—ranging from despondency over sin and suffering to unbridled joy in His presence and His repeated promises for forgiveness and salvation. [...] Some details provided in God’s songbook can give us new ways to understand and appreciate our role in the final moments of earth’s history.” (sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson connects two very different passages: Hebrews 9:11-15 and Psalm 122. How does the arrival of the Messiah introduce a better world? In this reality, Jesus is both the priest who offered the sacrifice and the sacrifice itself. The Messiah’s death took the place of ancient Israelite sacrifice as a better, and indeed final, once-for-all sacrifice. How did the living God, through his sacrifice, reveal once

for all the way into his presence? How can this lead his people to serve God gladly and joyfully without the slightest shadow or stain on their consciences? How is this calling us to an exuberant and joyful service? If this is true, why is motivation so often caused by guilt and fear?

3. “In Revelation 14, we find God’s people standing on Mount Zion.” (Monday’s lesson) Mount Zion is the place of origin for good news (Isaiah 40:9-11). It is a place that demands a holiness from Israel that will match God’s own holiness (15:1-2; 24:3-5). Compare David’s reply to an all-important question: “Who shall dwell in your holy hill?” in Psalms 15 and 24 with the description of the people standing on Zion in Revelation 14:1–5.
4. Discuss the statement: “Now that the Lamb of God is established on Mount Zion, in the sanctuary, we can also be present there because of His perfect righteousness credited to us by faith. [...] Without His blood, what hope would we have? None, actually.” (Monday’s lesson)
5. “When the Bible describes a remnant with God’s name inscribed in their foreheads, it is not a matter of having literal letters written there; it is a matter of having God’s character inscribed in your mind, your heart, and so now in our lives we reflect the love and character of God.” (Tuesday’s lesson)
6. The remnant gathered on Zion have the name of the Father and the Lamb engraved on their foreheads. How is that related to God’s promise, “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” and, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (Hebrews 10:16, 17)? Is there any connection with the stages of faith?
7. Wednesday’s lesson invites us to compare Psalm 5 with the language of Revelation 14:1–12. The psalm draws sharp contrasts between those who are lost and those who have been redeemed. The redeemed in Revelation (144,000) are characterized by what they are *not* twice and by what they *are* three times. What are they? Why is that important in the context of mudslinging and misrepresentation that “no lie is found” in the mouth of this group (Revelation 14:5)?
8. Thursday’s lesson concentrates on the fact that in Psalm 51:7–15, after he has been pardoned and purged from his sin, David promises to “teach transgressors your way” and this is then connected with the proclamation of the three angels’ messages from Revelation 14.

How can the message that humans have sinned, but God still works through them bring courage to you and our world? Israel has sinned, but God still uses his people to bless others; monarchs have sinned grievously, but God still promises to bring into the world his anointed king. One day this Davidic king will be exalted over the nations and bring God’s justice and peace to the world. And he will also bring an end to the long history of failure – human failure, Israel’s failure, the failure of (Davidic) royal history. We find ourselves at the intersection of the past, present and future of God’s time and our time, a place of intense pain and intense joy. We are called to

live, joyfully and painfully, in the story which is both his and ours, and be a blessing to all.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And he was chided—even by some Christians who hadn't worked it out too well yet, and they would say to Paul, "Aren't you doing away with the law by your emphasis on trust?"

"No," he said, Romans 3:31. "Faith does not abolish law. Faith establishes law, by putting it in its proper perspective."

Next question: "What is the proper perspective? What is the over-all view, the larger view of all this?"

The answer is in Galatians 3, the text that was the basis of the Minneapolis General Conference discussion. Look at that, Galatians 3:19: "Why then the law?", he was asked. "It was added." What law was added? Remember the debate at Minneapolis? Was it the Ten Commandments? Was it the ceremonial law? They had quite a disagreement. When we get to Galatians, I'll bring the documents (some of which are not published at the present time).

Did you know that the President of the General Conference and a young physician—they wrote two books holding two opposite views on this matter? Elder Butler and Dr. Waggoner. I mean, how could a young physician talk to the General Conference President like that? It was very respectful! The introductions are very polite. But then they mince no words about their disagreement. So they went to Ellen White and said, "What law was added to be our guardian to bring us to Christ?" "Why," she says, "it was the Ten Commandments and the ceremonial law; all of it." All law was added because of the emergency of sin.

But what is sin? Romans 14, "Sin is a lack of trust. A breach of trust."

What is sin? 1 John 3:4, "Sin is rebelliousness." Sin is a stubborn unwillingness to listen. Or in the book of James, sin is knowing to do what is right and not doing it. Doesn't that perfectly describe the children of Israel when God brought them out of the land of Egypt? Was there trust?

Now, He gave them a chance, first. He said, "Let me be your God, and you be My people. Let's trust each other. I can get you into Canaan. You won't even have to fight." And Ellen White observes, it was never God's design that they fight their way into Canaan, any more than they fought their way out of Egypt. He would have fed them and clothed them. Did they get ill in the wilderness? Did they lack anything? Nothing. He said, "I'll take you there, and the angel will clear the way before you. Yes, I'll have to lay many of My sinful children to sleep until the resurrection but let Me put the Canaanites to sleep and all those other people. Let Me do it.

They are My children.” It’s hard for us to kill each other without getting angry while we do it. Let the eternal God put His own children to sleep. It would be much better, wouldn’t it?

But they didn’t trust Him—didn’t trust Him on anything. And when they got to the river Jordan, they begged Moses to take them back to Egypt. What do you do with people who aren’t willing to listen and don’t trust you? Rebellious people, 1 John 3:4. Untrusting people, Romans 14. Don’t you have to do everything that is described in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy?

Well, there was one other thing God could have done. He could have said, “I think that surely none of My loyal angels would misunderstand Me if I let those noisy, troublesome, ungrateful, untrustworthy people go.” But instead of doing that, He went to work. All through these books, first He raised His voice. Then He even had to tell them how to be modest in worship, how to be reverent, how to do this, that and the other, in great detail. How He could be misunderstood as a fussy, arbitrary, even fuddy-duddy God, hardly one to be revered and respected, surely not one to be loved; but a God who desires the service of fear.

But the prophets came along, and they didn’t misunderstand it that way, did they? How could Hosea, and Amos, and Micah, and David even, and Isaiah and Jeremiah understand as clearly as they did? Apparently, though, it takes a little time. It took Saul (later Paul), quite some time to put it all together. And when he put it all together, he wrote in Galatians 3, “Let me tell you why God gave us all these things in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. It was all added because we were such sinners, and so stubborn, and so noisy, and so ungrateful.”

The amazing thing is that instead of giving us up, God stooped to meet us where we are. He spoke a language we could understand. He led us no faster than we were able to follow. And He ran a grave risk of being misunderstood, in using such methods to get our attention and hold it long enough to tell us more of the truth about Himself. In that light, all this material in the Old Testament is magnificent evidence of the truth about God. What a condescending, skillful, versatile teacher He is! If that’s where the people were, that’s where He met them. That’s why He didn’t give the Sermon on the Mount on Sinai. They wouldn’t have respected it. They wouldn’t even have heard it. It took thunder and lightning. What a terrible thing though, that He had to say, “Stop the killing, and the stealing, and the lying, and the cheating.” But then in the tenth commandment, He indicated how lofty His ideals were. He said, “When I’ve really fulfilled My purposes for you, My children, you not only won’t do any of those things prohibited here; you won’t even want to. You’ll love and trust in the highest sense of freedom. That’s what I want.” But only occasionally did He have a friend who really saw the truth.

And I maintain that’s where we are right now. And there’s a call to go back to the symbols and to the legal picture, to the limited, legal model of things which God indeed most graciously gave us.

But that was an emergency measure. It's time for us to climb up the mountain to the mouth of the cave with Elijah, and to stand with Hosea, and Micah, and Amos, and David, and Paul, and realize that behind any and all methods, emergency methods, that God has used for our sakes, there remains the one and only thing He has ever asked of His children, and that is trust. But His enemies have said He cannot be trusted. God has demonstrated the truth. Look what it cost Him! Look what He's done to demonstrate that He can be trusted. Anybody who would go to those lengths can be trusted. But sometimes we get so involved in all the emergency measures, we forget what it is He really wants.

So the question today is, "Why, then, the whole legal model?" It was added because of lack of trust, because of rebelliousness. But let's not be so caught up in the emergency measures that we forget that God's intent is that ultimately we trust Him enough, even trust each other enough, and be trustworthy ourselves enough, to be safe for life to continue as it was in the beginning: perfect freedom, perfect security, perfect happiness; everybody trusting everybody else. Even God able to trust in us. If the whole plan of salvation and the blood of Christ do not lead us back to trust, they are of absolutely no avail. That's my absolute conviction from reading all sixty-six. And I see it in every one of the books. {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)

Further Study with Ellen White

The Messiah was to be hid in God, and God was to be revealed in the character of His Son. Without a knowledge of God, humanity would be eternally lost. Without divine help, men and women would sink lower and lower. Life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world. Man's necessities could be met in no other way. {PK 693.1}

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}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {MH 419.4}

Christ is your Advocate. In this powerful, hearty recognition of God's love, take the hand of Christ, and hold it fast. His hand holds you much firmer than you can hold His hand. {SD 22.6}

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}

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above. But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace. Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled. {DA 37.2}

Up to the time of Christ's first advent, men worshiped cruel, despotic gods. Even the Jewish mind was reached through fear, and not love. Christ's mission on the earth was to reveal to men that God was not a despot, but a heavenly Father, full of love and mercy for His children. {18MR 112.4}

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}

Never are we absent from the mind of God. God is our joy and our salvation. {CTr 357.2}

The precious Saviour will send help just when we need it. The way to heaven is consecrated by His footprints. Every thorn that wounds our feet has wounded His. Every cross that we are called to bear He has borne before us. The Lord permits conflicts, to prepare the soul for peace. 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}

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}

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. {COL 162.4}

Accustomed as they had been in Egypt to material representations of the Deity, and these of the most degrading nature, it was difficult for them to conceive of the existence or the character of the Unseen One. In pity for their weakness, God gave them a symbol of His presence. "Let them make Me a sanctuary," He said; "that I may dwell among them." Exodus 25:8. {Ed 35.1}

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}

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}

In the councils of heaven it was decided that principles must be acted upon that would not at once destroy Satan’s power, for it was His [God’s] purpose to place things upon an eternal basis of security. . . . God’s order must be contrasted with the new order after Satan’s devising. The corrupting principles of Satan’s rule must be revealed. The principles of righteousness expressed in God’s law must be demonstrated as unchangeable, eternal, perfect.—*Manuscript 57*, 1896 (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, pp. 360, 361). {CTr 13.6}

The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. It comes through the gentleness of the inspiration of His word, through the inward working of His Spirit, the fellowship of the soul with Him who is its life. The greatest manifestation of its power is seen in human nature brought to the perfection of the character of Christ. {7T 143.2}

The truth is all powerful and far reaching. It will unite nationalities in one great brotherhood. . . . Christ in men unites them on one grand platform, preparing for the uniting in one family in heaven. It is the truth that makes men one and removes national prejudice. . . . {OHC 171.4}

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}

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}

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}

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}

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

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}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour. {COL 419.6}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy Lesson 9 “In the Psalms: Part 2”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 46; Jeremiah 4:23–26; Psalm 47:1–4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17; Psalm 75; Revelation 14:6–12.

Memory Text

“Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Selah” (Psalm 67:3, 4, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Very Present Help in the Time of Trouble
- III. Hope Amid Turmoil
- IV. Under His Feet
- V. Wine and Blood
- VI. That Your Salvation May Be Known
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The Psalms also deal with key issues associated with sin and suffering, judgment, the battle between good and evil, the nature of justice and injustice, and persecution in great depth, exploring nearly every possible human emotion—from dark despondency to unbridled joy. [...] We read about individuals wrestling with the question of why doesn’t God address evil more directly and immediately, a question that no doubt we all have asked. [...] Are these not issues and questions that we, in our context today, wrestle with, as well? Which is why we will continue unpacking Psalms in order to learn more about these crucial truths.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson looks at Psalm 46. Unlike the memory verse (Psalm 67:3-4) it does not begin with a call to praise but offers praise to God who is present in Zion. It needs to be read in the context of Psalms 42-48 which begins Book II of the Psalter. The message is that there are powers of chaos, evil and war in the world and that God is present to tame those principalities and powers and bring refuge and peace. How can this be helpful in our lives today?

3. Martin Luther provided the most famous rendering of this psalm in his hymn “A Mighty Fortress”, which has inspired generations of worshipers. The opening words were frequently heard following the events of September 11, 2001 in the US. However, turning to this (and other similar psalms) in times of personal and national crisis, there is a danger that we equate ourselves (or our nation or church) with the ancient people of Israel. We then see God as unequivocally fighting on our side and justifying our actions against other people. Our fortress must be God, not our group, entity, nation or church.
4. What is Jeremiah 4:23-26 talking about? How will the destruction of the coming judgment on Judah make the earth uninhabitable (as if Genesis 1 never happened)? How does 4:27 bring a tiny glimmer of hope with the preservation of a remnant?
5. Tuesday’s lesson looks at Psalm 47:1-4. What was the purpose of this psalm sandwiched between the two songs of Zion in Psalms 46 & 48? What was its role in the temple liturgy? Why is this psalm used particularly for the Ascension Day?
6. What is Psalm 75 all about (prophetic judgment, divine speech, thanksgiving and instruction)? (Wednesday’s lesson) How does our belief in the future restorative justice of God lead us confidently to do justice ourselves in the present (75:10)? The congregation portrayed in the psalm is waiting for the reign of God to be realized, and thus waiting for justice. Such waiting brings anxiety and insecurity which drives the human desire to make efforts to bring security. But securing the future is ultimately in God’s hands.
7. Thursday’s lesson focuses on Psalm 67. How are the other nations drawn into the blessed “us” by the creator God (67:7)? Alongside the sustained commitment that God has to Israel the work of God cannot be contained only for and in Israel but always spills over into the larger horizon of other peoples (67:4 cf. 96:10a). The psalm entertains this larger vision of God so that the blessings given to Israel are readily extended to all of God’s beloved people.
8. What are some steps we can take to avoid being complacent about our role in God’s chosen community, while focusing also on the wider realization that God is constantly at work everywhere in the world? How can this psalm help us see that God is at work everywhere and none of us have a monopoly on God’s blessings for the future?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Is there a verse in the Bible that says that when Jesus died, He was given up? Romans 4:25 says Christ was given up for our transgressions. And many versions, with their reformation influence translate this “Christ was put to death.” There is nothing in there about being put to death. It says He was given up. To tie that in with the issue in the Great Controversy, God gave up His Son as if He were a sinner. Just as He will give us up, if we are real sinners at the end. Because

you can't force people to trust you, in a free universe, what can you do but give people up? When Jesus was given up, yes, He died.

So I believe there were three questions answered by Gethsemane and the cross. One: who is right, God or the devil? Is God a liar when He says sin results in death? The devil says, "Yes, God has lied to you." "You will not die" is the teaching of the devil. God says, "You will die. But it is not torture and execution at My hands." The devil developed the whole doctrine of hell to turn the universe against God. And God says that is not true. And I say, "Well, how do I know how the wicked are going to die?" He says, "Only one person has ever died the death as a result of sin. It's only happened once in all eternity. I died that death. I wouldn't ask any of you to prove the truthfulness of My word. This is the meaning of substitutionary death." Yes, He died in our place, but not for legal reasons. He died because He wouldn't think of asking anybody else to go through that painful experience to demonstrate the truth. Besides, our death wouldn't have answered it anyway. Because if our dying would have answered the question, then He might as well have let Lucifer die in the beginning.

But you remember the explanation. Had He left Lucifer to die, the universe would have misunderstood and assumed God had put him to death. So only by God coming, He said, "No one takes My life from Me. Nobody can kill Me. I'm going through this Myself. I have arranged this with my Father." And the universe looking on said, "The Father isn't killing the Son." God isn't killing God. And it was clear enough to them that they could say, "Our questions are answered." One: sin does result in death. Two: it is not torture and execution at the hands of our gracious God.

Only one thing left. "God, why were You so concerned that we understand this?" God says, "Because if you serve Me from fear, it will turn you into rebels—holy rebels." He says, "Come to Calvary." On Calvary, Jesus was tortured to death. By whom? The most devout, blueprinting Adventists the world has ever known. Absolutely dedicated to God, the scriptures, creation, Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, you name it. Jesus said, "You even strain gnats out of your goat's milk." Real health reformers. You couldn't fault them for a thing. You couldn't have disfellowshipped one of the people who crucified Christ. Their lives were apparently without blemish.

But they hated Him. They hated His picture of God. They killed Him to silence His unbiblical heresy. And the angels looking on said, "We thought, by sending Your Son to Palestine, You did that to get a good running start with people who already agreed with You. We didn't realize You sent Him there to prove this costly point, that if we obey You for the wrong reason, because we don't really know You, we could turn into Your worst enemies in the middle of our Sabbath keeping and our tithe-paying and our health-reforming." And that's why I think the biggest mistake the Adventist church could make in these last days is to have one tremendous revival in reformation, get out the blueprint, straighten out our lives, without spending much

more time on the picture of God. Because if we do the right things for the wrong reason, we'll do what some of the Jews did and become His enemies.

So I believe the cross was the only way to answer the questions. Without answers to the questions, there would be no peace, no freedom, no security throughout the universe. So it was for these specific reasons. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Questions People are Asking About the Plan of Salvation, recorded April 1983, Redlands, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMQUESTP> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMQUESTP> (Part 2)

The point is that we are being considered by our future neighbors and friends, and they're worried. Wouldn't you be if you were an angel? They're going to let some of us in. They had a war once before, and Satan capitalizes on this. Ellen White says he has an exact knowledge of every sin he's ever tempted us to commit. We sometimes think our sins are rather private, and when they're forgiven nobody knows them anymore. No, they know them. They're headlines throughout the universe. They're not forgotten. It wouldn't be fair to forget our sins and then put David's in the Bible. We preach about David's sins. Nobody's sins are hidden; they're all well-known up there.

And the devil arises and says, "Let me show you that God once more has made a mistake. He says Jones is safe to save." And he lists all the things he's tempted us to do. And Ellen White has a tremendous speech in his mouth. "Look at all the sins that have marked their disloyalty to God. Look at their selfishness", et cetera, et cetera. How he dares make such a speech is almost unbelievable! And then he points to all the records and says, "Look at all the sins they have committed." If you had just heard your life described, and it was put to the vote, would you vote for yourself? I mean would you hang your head and wonder what's going to happen? But then Christ arises, as she describes it, and He does not excuse our sins.

He says, "The devil has told the truth. Jones did everything he mentioned. In fact, due to the shortness of time, he left out a lot he could have mentioned." And there comes a murmur in the crowd and it's Jones' guardian angel, and he says, "Look, I was there, do you want me to fill in?" And the Lord says, "No, we've heard quite enough. Jones on the record looks simply frightful. But let Me tell you; that record is irrelevant, and it's out of date. It describes the kind of person Jones used to be. But Jones has a new heart and a right spirit within him. He was born as I told Nicodemus had to be, of the Spirit. This doesn't describe Jones."

You see, God is not concerned about our sinful past, He's only concerned about the kind of people we are now. And if I were an angel, I wouldn't be concerned with whether or not God had forgiven Idi Amin; I'd want to know if it was safe to live next door to Idi Amin. When the prophet Isaiah meets King Manasseh in the hereafter and he's innocently carrying a pruning

hook or something to prune his vines, the last time he held one in his hands he was sawing poor Isaiah in half in a hollow log. And will God say, “Well, don’t worry about him carrying that saw, I forgave him.” That wouldn’t reassure me at all. I’d want to know if he could be trusted with a sharp saw. And that’s why Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Not unless ye be forgiven.” No, He said, “Not unless you be born again.” It’s a healing ministry; new hearts, right spirits. David finally got the message and said, “Sacrifices won’t do it, I need a new heart, I need a right spirit, I need truth in the inner man.” Now he didn’t say, “I’ll stop offering sacrifices” because Christ hadn’t yet come. But he says, “I’m going to start offering them for a different reason now.” As Hebrews says, all the sacrifices were a constant reminder of sin, and that sin leads to death. He says, “I’ll go on doing that.” But no more were they sacrifices “to propitiate the wrath of God”, and things like that.

Well, I see this discussion going on in heaven. What chance do we have? Has God proved His ability to judge the human heart? Job showed that. And many other places. The last generation may show that. No angel can read our hearts; no angel can read our thoughts. If they could, they could have read Lucifer’s thoughts and known, they would have known he was a deceiver. They couldn’t read what his plan was. Only God can read our innermost thoughts. And so they have to look to God to say, “Is Jones really changed? Is he safe to save?” And when Jesus says, “Yes he is”, then they say, “Then we’ll welcome him at the gates.” And so, I think they have very legitimate questions. I mean, they should be afraid that we’re coming in. They have to hear Jesus say, “Don’t judge the man by the record. Let Me tell you, he’s not that kind of person anymore. He’s been changed.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Atonement and Your Picture of God, recorded May 1993, San Diego, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

[http://pkp.cc/1MMAANDP \(Part 1\)](http://pkp.cc/1MMAANDP) [http://pkp.cc/2MMAANDP \(Part 2\)](http://pkp.cc/2MMAANDP)

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>

So the first angel comes with the everlasting gospel, the everlasting good news. What is it? Well, everyone ought, perhaps, to state his own version. I had the privilege of putting it on the back of the invitation to these conversations about God. I wrote:

The good news is God is not the kind of Person His enemies have made Him out to be—arbitrary, unforgiving, and severe. Jesus said, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." God is just as loving and trustworthy as His Son, just as willing to forgive and heal. Though infinite in majesty and power, our Creator is an equally gracious Person who values nothing higher than the freedom, the dignity, and the individuality of His intelligent creatures—that their love, their faith, their willingness to listen and obey may be freely given. He even prefers to regard us not as servants but as friends.

This is the truth revealed through all the books of Scripture. This is the everlasting Good News that wins the trust and admiration of God's loyal children throughout the universe.

Could you be dogmatic about that? That's the only "truth" that is safe to be dogmatic about. To be like Paul and say, "Even if an angel came with a different picture of God, it is wrong, and I will not believe it." To me, this is not a negotiable position. You see, one can be adamant, immovable, and dogmatic about freedom, because you never hurt anybody with that view. You are immovably committed to freedom, and to the picture of God as valuing nothing higher than the freedom of His children. To me, that is the essence of the message of the first angel. So the second angel comes and simply says, "The opposition has collapsed in corruption and defeat." The third angel warns of the inevitable consequence of preferring Satan's lies to this magnificent truth. {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>

Further Study with Ellen White

In the future life we shall understand things that here greatly perplex us. We shall realize how strong a helper we had and how angels of God were commissioned to guard us as we followed the counsel of the Word of God. {HP 257.3}

To all who receive Him, Christ will give power to become the sons of God. He is a present help in every time of need. {HP 257.4}

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will never betray your trust. If you will ask help of God you need not ask in vain. In order to encourage us to have confidence and trust He comes near us by His holy Word and Spirit, and seeks in a thousand ways to win our confidence. But in nothing does He take more delight than in receiving the weak who come to Him for strength. If we will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to find an ear to hear and an arm to save. {TDG 194.5}

Our God is a very present help in time of need. He is acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our hearts, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distresses, He is making arrangements for our deliverance.—Letter 73, Feb. 1, 1905, to Drs. D. H. and Laretta Kress. {UL 46.6}

Oh, that we could all realize the nearness of heaven to earth! When the earthborn children know it not, they have angels of light as their companions. A silent witness guards every soul that lives, seeking to draw that soul to Christ. {6T 366.1}

We can see only a little way before us; “but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” He never becomes confused. He sits above the confusion and distractions of the earth, and all things are opened to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He can order that which His providence sees is best. {ML 10.4}

You must learn the simple art of taking God at His word; then you have solid ground beneath your feet. {ML 10.8}

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}

Since God is infinite, and in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, we may to all eternity be ever searching, ever learning, yet never exhaust the riches of His wisdom, His goodness, or His power. {Ed 172.2}

It was by deception that Satan seduced angels; thus he has in all ages carried forward his work among men, and he will continue this policy to the last. Should he openly profess to be warring

against God and His law, men would beware; but he disguises himself, and mixes truth with error. The most dangerous falsehoods are those that are mingled with truth. It is thus that errors are received that captivate and ruin the soul. By this means Satan carries the world with him. But a day is coming when his triumph will be forever ended. {PP 338.3}

God's dealings with rebellion will result in fully unmasking the work that has so long been carried on under cover. The results of Satan's rule, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, will be laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The law of God will stand fully vindicated. It will be seen that all the dealings of God have been conducted with reference to the eternal good of His people, and the good of all the worlds that He has created. Satan himself, in the presence of the witnessing universe, will confess the justice of God's government and the righteousness of His law. {PP 338.4}

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}

To Daniel was given a vision of fierce beasts, representing the powers of the earth. But the ensign of the Messiah's kingdom is a lamb. While earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power, Christ is to banish every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion. His kingdom was to be established to uplift and ennoble fallen humanity (Letter 32, 1899). {4BC 1171.5}

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}

In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin. {COL 77.1}

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 the earth. {Ed 178.1}

When self is hid in Jesus, we are shielded from the darts of the enemy (Letter 16a, 1895).
{7BC 908.1}

The Lord does not judge us according to the elevation of our various spheres, but according to the faithfulness with which we fill them. {6T 439.4}

There is in the Saviour's words another lesson, a lesson of wonderful forbearance and tender love. As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast. {COL 72.1}

The teaching of this parable is illustrated in God's own dealing with men and angels. Satan is a deceiver. When he sinned in heaven, even the loyal angels did not fully discern his character. This was why God did not at once destroy Satan. Had He done so, the holy angels would not have perceived the justice and love of God. A doubt of God's goodness would have been as evil seed that would yield the bitter fruit of sin and woe. Therefore the author of evil was spared, fully to develop his character. Through long ages God has borne the anguish of beholding the work of evil, He has given the infinite Gift of Calvary, rather than leave any to be deceived by the misrepresentations of the wicked one; for the tares could not be plucked up without danger of uprooting the precious grain. And shall we not be as forbearing toward our fellow men as the Lord of heaven and earth is toward Satan? {COL 72.2}

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. {RC 27.4}

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}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 10 “Upon Whom the Ends Have Come”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 6:12–17; Matthew 24:36–44; Genesis 6:1–8; 2 Peter 2:4–11; Genesis 18:17–32; Daniel 7:9, 10.

Memory Text

“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:11, 12, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Wrath of the Lamb
- III. Noah’s Evangelism
- IV. The Story of Sodom and Gomorrah
- V. The Judge of All the Earth
- VI. The Pre-Advent Judgment
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The Bible is filled with accounts of God’s people that point to future events and that hold keys to helping us understand ‘present truth.’ Some of these important stories are obvious, [...] others require careful thought and exploration in order to mine from them the truths that have been given us in the Word of God. Over the next couple of weeks, we will be searching through a number of key stories in order to see what they might have to say about events such as the Second Coming, the investigative judgment, the final crisis, and more.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. In our memory text, Paul reminds the Corinthians that the biblical stories are not just interesting illustrations of moral and religious truths. They are the earlier parts of a long narrative that has now reached its climax in Jesus, the Messiah, and in the people who have come to belong to him.
3. What do we mean when we say that “all these things happened to them as examples [patterns, *types*], and they were written for our admonition”? How would

- you apply this to the story from 2 Kings 3:26-27? What is the purpose of biblical history?
4. We do not want to be like actors who have blundered on to the stage in the middle of a performance and do not even know which act we are in. How do we discover what has happened so far, how the plot is working out, and what we can learn from what other people who played in previous acts got right or wrong?
 5. The lesson author chooses five stories which are to illustrate what was said in point one. The first of them in Sunday's lesson is the cry of the lost: "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:12-17) How is God's presence and absence combined in these verses? How are we to understand the "wrath of the Lamb"? Is it to be understood as retributive revenge of the meek and mild Jesus, or are there other ways of seeing it?
 6. Monday's lesson discusses the Flood story. What role does the story play in Genesis 6, and how is it interpreted by Jesus (Matthew 24:37-39) and Peter (2 Peter 3:5-7)? The lesson looks at Noah's evangelism, "with nothing to show for it but his own family in the ark". However, see Genesis 7:1, "you alone are righteous before me in this generation". How is the concept of a small number of righteous individuals being sufficient to save a whole community presented elsewhere in Genesis (18:16-33; 19:1-20 cf. Ezekiel 14:14-22)?
 7. Tuesday's lesson looks at how the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is seen through 2 Peter 2:4-11, Jude 5-8, and Ezekiel 16:46-50. What is the purpose of telling God's people that they were more wicked than people who were legendary for their wickedness?
 8. The actual story in Genesis 18:17-32 allows the reader to be privy to God's intentions regarding Sodom and Gomorrah (18:17-21) and leads to the crucial discussion between Abraham and God concerning the fate of the cities. Why is God presented as one who does not know how wicked the city is and whether he will destroy it or not? Why did Abraham willingly circumcise Ishmael (17:25-26) and plead for Sodom? What is the purpose of the story? What does Abraham learn as part of this process?
 9. Thursday's lesson focuses on the pre-advent judgment of Daniel 7:9-27. What do the heavenly beings learn through this process? "Imagine standing in judgment with all your secrets exposed before our holy God. What's your only hope at that time of judgment?" "As you consider the stories we studied this week, what cautions do you find for your own life?"
 10. By accepting the historical records as Israel's genuine experiences with God and trying to understand why they described God as they did, we see a gracious God who stepped into their world meeting them in their time and place. The invitation to see God in a new light is not a problem to be overcome, but an invitation to meet

God, who is always present here and now, wherever we are, and to recognize that he is with us in that process.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Almost two thousand years have passed since God won His case on Calvary. Satan's lies and accusations have long ago been met. The freedom of the universe has been eternally secured. Why, then, does God still tolerate this one rebellious spot in His loyal universe? He longs to recreate our world and give it to His trusting saints. Why does He still wait?

When Jesus returns, He will come to a generation of believers who have experienced Satan's last supreme attempt to deceive and destroy God's loyal children on this planet. They will have accomplished what one-third of the angels failed to do. They will have refused to be turned against God by Satan's lies. They will have been able to say with Paul, "If anyone, even an angel from heaven, should bring a different version of the everlasting Good News, he is wrong, and we will not believe it!" (cf. Galatians 1:8) These are not babes in the truth. They are grown-up believers. They meet the biblical description of Christian perfection and maturity: they have "their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil." (Hebrews 5:14) They have not only the teachable faith of a little child, which still needs much protection, but—like Job—they can stand alone. Though their faith be severely tested, they will never let God down.

God is waiting for such firm believers. The last book in the Bible pictures the angels as mercifully holding back the final winds of strife until the minds of God's children have been unshakably sealed and settled into the truth.

But what is this truth? Remember the pious beliefs of those who nailed Jesus to the cross—then hurried home to keep the Sabbath holy! Do we accept Jesus' testimony about His Father? Are we convinced that God is just as gracious as the Son? Or are we still "easily swayed by every wind of doctrine"? (Ephesians 4:14) Do we still need emergency measures to be reverent and do what is right? Are we the reason why God still waits? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18, "God Waits For His Children To Grow Up", Bible Reference Sheet, 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/18MMCAG>*

Lou: In the book of Revelation, it describes God as resurrecting the wicked at the end of the Millennium. Now, why does God do this? They are the wicked. They are lost anyway. Why not just leave them asleep? Isn't that harsh?

Graham: I imagine the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah arising and looking around and saying, “Here we go again!” It seems cruel and inhuman, doesn’t it, to resurrect them? There has to be a purpose.

By the way, the word “millennium” is another Latin word that you won’t find anywhere in Scripture, like “justification,” or “sanctification.”

Lou: Should I say, “a thousand years”? That’s in the Bible, isn’t it?

Graham: It’s Latin. “*Mille*” is a thousand, and “*annus*” is a year. We know the word “*annus*” as in A.D., *Anno Domini*, the year of the Lord. So “millennium” is a thousand years. And it’s true, at the end of the thousand years between the Second Coming of Christ and the third coming, between the resurrection of the righteous and then the resurrection of the wicked, the rebels are resurrected, to be sure.

Why would God do that? I mean, what suffering! How terrible to see loved ones out there. God would only do this if it would say something of very great importance that would contribute to our understanding and the security of the universe. One thing we’ll see, if we should wonder why Uncle Bill is not in the Kingdom. Uncle Bill who said, “If you just prove it to me, I’d come in.” And there is Uncle Bill out there. And here’s the New Jerusalem. Here’s Christ in His human form. Here’s all the evidence, and Uncle Bill is not moved one bit. In fact, Revelation goes on to say that Satan moves among these rebels who have been resurrected and he deceives them into marching against the New Jerusalem as if to destroy Christ again. And you say, “God, your diagnosis was right. More time, more evidence would have done no good for Uncle Bill.”

Lou: So that resurrection is a part of the essential demonstration.

Graham: It’s a confirmation.

Lou: That God is bringing peace.

Graham: When God says, “Uncle Bill was not safe to save,” and I look at my bumper sticker and say, “Well, if You’ve said it, I believe it. That’s all there is to it.” And God says, “You know better than that by now. I want you to see the evidence. You’ll weep when you see it, but Uncle Bill will not respond.”

Lou: Speaking of the millennium now, this thousand-year period, what are the saints, the redeemed, those who are saved, what are they doing? That’s a long period of time.

Graham: Yes, I like to remember what Peter said, “With the Lord a thousand years is like a day.” You could have translated that “a millennium is like a day, and a day is like a millennium.” I don’t think we need to worry about the time. I think that a thousand years with the Lord will seem like a day. But I think there are important things that have to happen during that time. The angels have had a chance during what we call the Investigative Judgment, though that’s not a biblical term—this time when the family meets to consider candidates for the Kingdom, so

that our future neighbors and friends may be satisfied that it's safe to admit rebels like us. What about us? We've not seen that. I think during the Millennium those who have been adjudged safe to save will have their opportunity to ask questions, see the evidence, to find out why Mother isn't there. I would find that very sad. Well, I know He would be fair about it, that He would show me the evidence so I would be satisfied.

More than that, there's another very gripping thing that may need to happen during the Millennium. We will be preparing ourselves to face that awful scene when the wicked are resurrected and die in a fiery moment of destruction. We have to see that someday. Are we ready to see it and not become afraid of God? I think those of us who "grow up," who may be alive to see Christ come, we will have been so settled into the truth that we can see the seven last plagues and not become afraid of God. We might be ready to see this. But think of all the babes in the truth who have been saved from the foot of Mt. Sinai. Think of the thief on the cross. Think of all the others who have not had time and evidence to become confirmed in this.

Everyone must be ready for that awesome day when God may call to us, to everybody who will be inside the New Jerusalem that day, when God says, "Children, you know what's coming next. Do you want to come out to the wall and watch? Or do you want to hide in the basement somewhere? You know I'm about to give My rebellious children up, and untold numbers of them are going to die. And you know why I've waited so long." And so we stand, perhaps, and watch our God, as fire comes down from heaven and the glory of Him who is love will consume all that is out of harmony. And we know, because we are convinced about this, that as the wicked die, God will be crying: "Why will you die? How can I give you up? How can I let you go?" He's no more angry with them than He was with His Son as He gave Him up in Gethsemane and on Calvary.

And then when it's all over, God would turn to us and say, "How awful that was. But children, I have one last question to ask you all. Have I made you afraid? Because if I have, I've let it happen too soon, and I would have waited longer." But hopefully we will be so settled into the truth that we will be able to say to God, and maybe get a little closer and say, "It's all right, God. There was no other way." And then there is peace forever, in spite of that awful end. Are we ready to see that and not be made afraid? Because if it makes us afraid, then we'll serve Him from fear, and the obedience of fear produces the character of a rebel, and God still has the seeds of sin in His universe, and He has not won the war.

Lou: We are back where it began.

Graham: We are back at the very beginning. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #20 with Lou Venden, "At Peace with our Heavenly Father" 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/20MMCAG>*

Someone came between because of the emergency. It's not ideal. God would like to deal directly with us, face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. But because we don't know God, and we've been afraid, God has given us these pictures. He's given us a picture even of Jesus being our judge. Doesn't Jesus deal with this? He says, "You're all comforted that I'm going to be your judge. Because you were scared My Father was going to judge you, isn't that right?" They said, "Oh, we're so relieved You're going to be our judge." Is that because the Father is not as gracious and forgiving as the Son, that we say we're glad the Son's going to be our judge? So before He went back to heaven, He said, "I've got to clear that up, too. Actually, if you've seen Me, you've seen the Father. You'd receive just as gracious judgment from My Father as from Me. But I'd like to take you a step further. I'm not going to judge you anyway." "Oh, there'll be something that will judge you. The truth will judge you. The truth about My Father in the Great Controversy. The truth about the kind of person He is and what He wants of His children, and the way He governs the universe. That's the truth. If you have loved that truth and it has led you to repentance and faith and trust, you will have stood humbly in our presence and said, 'What must I do to be saved and healed?' and we will have been able to save and heal you, and all will be well. But if you have turned down this truth about My Father and about Me, you will not know us; you will not be our friends; you will not trust us enough to listen. We will not be able to heal you, and you will perish and we will cry." And that's the judgment. {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)

Further Study with Ellen White

Like Israel of old the wicked destroy themselves; they fall by their iniquity. By a life of sin, they have placed themselves so out of harmony with God, their natures have become so debased with evil, that the manifestation of His glory is to them a consuming fire. {GC 37.1}

With sorrow and indignation the angels heard the choice made by the people and the sentence passed upon Christ. But they could not interfere; for in the great controversy between good and evil, Satan must be given every opportunity to develop his true character, that the heavenly universe and the race for whom Christ was giving His life might see the righteousness of God's purposes. Those under the control of the enemy must be allowed to reveal the principles of his government (MS 136, 1899). {5BC 1107.5}

The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does not lie in any sudden word or deed; it is the firm, determined resistance of truth and evidence. {FLB 58.4}

It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance. {FLB 58.5}

It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. {SC 17.2}

God destroys no man; but when a man stifles conviction, when he turns from evidence, he is sowing unbelief, and will reap as he has sown. As it was with Pharaoh, so it will be with him; when clearer light shines upon the truth, he will meet it with increased resistance, and the work of hardening the heart will go on with each rejection of the increasing light of heaven. In simplicity and truth we would speak to the impenitent in regard to the way in which men destroy their own souls. You are not to say that God is to blame, that he has made a decree against you. No, he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth, and to the haven of eternal bliss. No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. God follows men with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests upon the sinner. By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power; and thus he will pass from one stage of indifference to another, until, at last, the light will fail to impress him, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. {RH, February 17, 1891 par. 2}

Men put God out of their knowledge and worshiped the creatures of their own imagination; and as the result, they became more and more debased. The psalmist describes the effect produced upon the worshiper by the adoration of idols. He says, "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." Psalm 115:8. It is a law of the human mind that by beholding we become changed. Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower. The worshipers of false gods clothed their deities with human attributes and passions, and thus their standard of character was degraded to the likeness of sinful humanity. They were defiled in consequence. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . The earth also

was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence.” God had given men His commandments as a rule of life, but His law was transgressed, and every conceivable sin was the result. The wickedness of men was open and daring, justice was trampled in the dust, and the cries of the oppressed reached unto heaven. {PP 91.2}

From the opening of the great controversy it has been Satan’s purpose to misrepresent God’s character and to excite rebellion against His law, and this work appears to be crowned with success. The multitudes give ear to Satan’s deceptions and set themselves against God. But amid the working of evil, God’s purposes move steadily forward to their accomplishment; to all created intelligences He is making manifest His justice and benevolence. Through Satan’s temptations the whole human race have become transgressors of God’s law, but by the sacrifice of His Son a way is opened whereby they may return to God. Through the grace of Christ they may be enabled to render obedience to the Father’s law. Thus in every age, from the midst of apostasy and rebellion, God gathers out a people that are true to Him—a people “in whose heart is His law.” Isaiah 51:7. {PP 338.2}

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 rejection of light darkens the mind and hardens the heart, so that it is easier for them to take the next step in sin and to reject still clearer light, until at last their habits of wrongdoing become fixed. Sin ceases to appear sinful to them. {CC 108.5}

True religion ennobles the mind, refines the taste, sanctifies the judgment, and makes its possessor a partaker of the purity and the holiness of heaven. It brings angels near and separates us more and more from the spirit and influence of the world. It enters into all the acts and relations of life and gives us the “spirit of a sound mind,” and the result is happiness and peace. {CH 629.3}

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 counselors, and those who plot out mischief. {4BC 1161.1}

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature, that by beholding, we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of

God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward. {GC 555.1}

Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower. The worshipers of false gods clothed their deities with human attributes and passions, and thus their standard of character was degraded to the likeness of sinful humanity. {CC 32.5}

By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. {AG 302.5}

The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and result of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law.—GC 504. {TA 295.2}

We need to have higher and more distinct views of the character of Christ.... We are not to think of God only as a judge and to forget Him as a loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this, for our whole spiritual life is molded from our conceptions of God's character. We have lessons to learn of Jesus' love. {OHC 176.5}

God does not desire the destruction of any. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel 33:11. Throughout the period of probationary time His Spirit is entreating men to accept the gift of life. It is only those who reject His pleading that will be left to perish. God has declared that sin must be destroyed as an evil ruinous to the universe. Those who cling to sin will perish in its destruction. {COL 123.3}

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}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 11 “*Ruth and Esther*”

Read for this week’s study

Ruth 1:1–5; Ruth 2:5–20; Job 1:6–11; Matthew 4:8, 9; Esther 3:1–14; Revelation 12:14–17.

Memory Text

“So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter” (Esther 5:2, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Famine in “The House of Bread”
- III. Ruth and Boaz
- IV. Boaz, as Redeemer
- V. Haman and Satan
- VI. For Such a Time as This
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week we continue to explore stories that prefigure last-day events. [...] Our attention turns to two important women whose stories have touched the hearts of countless generations: Ruth and Esther. [...] Let’s look at the biblical accounts of these two women, whose life circumstances have been immortalized in the Word of God, and seek to draw whatever lessons we can from their experiences.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What can we learn about the state of this world from Ruth 1:1-5? (Sunday’s lesson) Psychologists say, “Life is a series of hope adjustments.” When your life doesn’t adjust itself to fit your hopes, how do you adjust your hope to fit your life? In a patriarchal world, this woman, Ruth, commits herself not to find a husband who could bring her hope, but to an old lady who has no hope at all.
3. In an ethnocentric world, Moabites were so despised by the Israelites that they were not allowed to join the assembly. They worshiped their god Chemosh by offering human sacrifices. Yet, a despised Moabite woman will immigrate to Israel. There is no divine guidance in this book. There is no burning bush. There is no still small

voice. There are no angelic visions. Nobody gets miraculously directed or healed or raised from the dead. Ruth has to make decisions on her own and muddle through life as best as she can.

4. Why is Ruth 2:5–20 such a pivotal moment in the story? Why was Naomi’s discovery of their benefactor’s identity such good news? (Monday’s lesson) After Boaz’ initial act of kindness, Naomi wisely sums up God’s posture toward them saying, “Blessed be he by the Lord whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead.” (2:20) The word here translated as “kindness” is an important word in Hebrew, *chesed*. It means a loyal enduring, relentlessly committed love, a kindness that pursues and never gives up, a love that you cannot escape even if you tried.
5. As Ruth moves away from the comfort and predictability of her homeland, toward Naomi with this risky and vulnerable love, God is all the while moving toward Ruth, holding Ruth in the truest and purest expression of that love.
6. As the book ends, there is a little two-verse genealogy that says in essence, “Boaz of Obed, Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David.” (4:21-22) (Tuesday’s lesson) This means when Ruth returns to Bethlehem in Israel with Naomi and when Ruth marries Boaz and has a child named Obed, this is the first time in 1,000 years of biblical history that Lot’s tribe (Moabites) and Abraham’s tribe (Israelites) are reunited. Through Ruth’s act of clinging to Naomi and her risky act of love that led her into this unknown territory, what appears to be a small story about the courage of two widowed refugees, is actually the story of how two widowed refugees united the entire Israelite nation and was actually the story of transformation on a worldwide scale. King David was one-eighth Moabite.
7. Ruth did not know her risky and faithful love of Naomi was actually the beginning of reconciling a 1,000-year-old feud from the past and the beginning of a new lineage and a new story that would change the world. Ordinary people making ordinary decisions are the ones who transform history.
8. Wednesday’s lesson looks at Haman and compares him to Satan from the book of Revelation. The book of Esther illustrates what happens when a real mission is hijacked by a shadow mission. What is the shadow mission of Ahasuerus, Haman, and Zeresh, his wife (5:13-14)? Why would Esther agree to replace Vashti after what happened to her? Esther’s apparent mission was to be eye candy for the most powerful man in the world.
9. In Thursday’s lesson Mordecai challenges Esther to ask God for clarity and courage about the mission God called her to do: “You have been called to your position for such a time as this.” (4:14) Who is “Mordecai” in your life? Who loves you enough to challenge you when you’re ready to settle for your shadow mission?
10. Just like in the book of Esther, God is still at work. God is at work for you. And because God is at work for you, you too don’t need to get seduced by your shadow mission! Because just like Ruth or Esther, you have come to your position and influence for such a time as this!

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now the Bible often speaks of such meetings of the heavenly family. Look, for example, in the first two chapters of Job. And if you wonder how many attend, look in the book of Daniel where it says a hundred million beings watch as the court meets. Now note how God resolves questions, particularly of the charges of Satan that are leveled against Him and against His friends before the heavenly court. In the book of Job, Satan accused God, and he accused Job of being unworthy of God's trust. Did God say, "That's a lie, Satan, this man is perfect"? God said, "You've raised a serious question. The only way to answer it is to show you."

And look at the rest of the book of Job. Did Job show himself to be a trustworthy friend of God? Did he trust God because he was being richly rewarded or did he seem to be utterly abandoned and yet he still trusted God? And the book ends with God saying, "Thank you, Job, you've said of Me what is right." Job was God's friend all the way through, and God could then turn to the heavenly court and say, "Do you need any more evidence about the falsity of Satan's charges and the trustworthiness of My friend Job?"

This is God's way. God Himself has been accused. He does not merely deny the accusation. He says, "Let Me show you. My children, let Me show you the falsity of these accusations and the truth about Myself, and you decide." Imagine the humility of the Infinite One submitting His character and government to the scrutiny and investigation of His mere creatures. But that's God's way, and it is the only way to really establish love and trust in the fullest sense of freedom. {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>

Lou: In our Bible reference sheet we have the passage regarding Abraham, and James' reference to that. Abraham is referred to as a "man of faith." Couldn't you call it "blind faith" when Abraham set out to obey God—when God said, "Take your son. I want you to bring him and to offer him as a sacrifice"?

Graham: Abraham's relationship with God—why, they were two of the best friends in all history! Abraham knew God well. He had had long experience with God. When God asked him to do things before, it had always worked out well and it made sense. So there was no *blind* faith on Abraham's part. God asked him to do something that puzzled him a great deal. At the moment he couldn't understand. But he said, "God, if it is you saying it (and I know You so well) I know this will make sense and there will be some solution, so I'm on my way."

This kind of faith is saying, “God, I’m on my way, but may I ask You why?” And so on the way, he asked why. And as he thought it through, he thought, the One who gave me this son miraculously is well able to resurrect my son. Or maybe He will provide a substitute. And Hebrews says he was right. So instead of that being blind faith, I would say he knew God well enough to go, and to know that there would be a solution that would make sense. And so it did.

Lou: But there was in that experience an element of uncertainty. That is to say, how will it work out? There was pain, certainly.

Graham: He wondered.

Lou: Yes. So faith can include that kind of thing.

Graham: Because God is so trustworthy, we are willing to obey Him when He asks us to do something beyond our present understanding. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3 with Lou Venden, “All God Asks Is Trust” 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/3MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart’s action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds. Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same—a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator’s will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one’s self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin. {Ed 99.2}

Christ undertook to redeem man and to rescue the world from the grasp of Satan. The great controversy begun in heaven was to be decided in the very world, on the very same field, that Satan claimed as his. {PP 69.2}

Those who accept Christ as their personal Saviour are not left as orphans, to bear the trials of life alone. He receives them as members of the heavenly family; He bids them call His Father their Father. They are His “little ones,” dear to the heart of God, bound to Him by the most tender and abiding ties. He has toward them an exceeding tenderness, as far surpassing what our father or mother has felt toward us in our helplessness as the divine is above the human. {DA 327.2}

How precious are these assurances that we shall never be left to take one step in our own finite strength, for He has said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Hebrews 13:5. We are fighting in the presence of invisible hosts. Unseen intelligences survey the whole array of evil, and help is at hand. We shall not only be provided with that which is necessary but shall be placed upon vantage ground. . . . {OHC 311.4}

Satan cannot overcome the humble learner of Christ, he who walks prayerfully before the Lord. “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard” for him against the enemy (Isaiah 59:19). Christ interposes Himself as a shelter, a retreat, and the wicked one cannot overcome Him.—Manuscript 109, Sept. 8, 1898, “Peter’s Fall and Restoration.” {TDG 260.6}

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.—R. & H., March 31, 1896. {CS 138.1}

God never forces the will or the conscience; but Satan’s constant resort—to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise seduce—is compulsion by cruelty. Through fear or force he endeavors to rule the conscience and to secure homage to himself. To accomplish this, he works through both religious and secular authorities, moving them to the enforcement of human laws in defiance of the law of God. {GC 591.2}

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}

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}

Satan assailed Christ with his fiercest and most subtle temptations, but he was repulsed in every conflict. Those battles were fought in our behalf; those victories make it possible for us to conquer. Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan. {GC 510.3}

Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that our bread and water will be sure at that time, and that we shall not lack or suffer hunger; for God is able

to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites. {EW 56.2}

Soon I saw the saints suffering great mental anguish. They seemed to be surrounded by the wicked inhabitants of the earth. Every appearance was against them. Some began to fear that God had at last left them to perish by the hand of the wicked. But if their eyes could have been opened, they would have seen themselves surrounded by angels of God. Next came the multitude of the angry wicked, and next a mass of evil angels, hurrying on the wicked to slay the saints. But before they could approach God's people, the wicked must first pass this company of mighty, holy angels. This was impossible. The angels of God were causing them to recede and also causing the evil angels who were pressing around them to fall back. {EW 283.1}

The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. {GC 634.1}

Fearful tests and trials await the people of God. The spirit of war is stirring the nations from one end of the earth to the other. But in the midst of the time of trouble that is coming—a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—God's chosen people will stand unmoved. Satan and his angels cannot destroy them, for angels that excel in strength will protect them.—Letter 119, 1904. {2SM 55.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 12 “Precursors”

Read for this week’s study

Daniel 2:31–45; Daniel 3:1–12, 17, 18; Revelation 13:11–17; Romans 1:18–25; Acts 12:1–17; Matthew 12:9–14.

Memory Text

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind”
(2 Timothy 1:7, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Daniel Two and the Historicist Approach to Prophecy
- III. Worshiping the Image
- IV. Worshiping the Image, Again
- V. Early Church Persecution
- VI. The Mark of the Beast
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week, we will look at two more Bible stories that foreshadow last-day events in remarkable detail. [...] Both examples highlight remarkable courage and provide keys to finding peace of mind under the most trying of circumstances. [...] Yes, last-day events will be difficult and trying for those who seek to stay faithful to God. But ultimately, we should view these events with hope, not fear. (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson focuses on Daniel chapter two: “the prophecies go through history in an unbroken sequence of empires, starting in antiquity and ending in the future, even to our time.” While it is true, the period from Daniel’s time to the end of the Roman empire covers 1080 years. The last period, covered by three verses, spans 1550 years till today. More details covering this period will be provided in Daniel chapters 7 and 8.
3. The chapter shows: the superiority of God-given wisdom over worldly wisdom, and points to the climax of history as the kingdom of God, not a human empire based on power and violence.

4. Monday's lesson spotlights chapter three. The common theme between chapters 2 & 3 is the image (stature) and enforced worship. In Daniel 3, king Nebuchadnezzar seems to believe that **size** will achieve his goal: the size of the idol matches Nebuchadnezzar's pride. He builds a colossal statue made entirely of gold, which is 90 feet (27 meters) high and 9 feet (2.7 meters) wide. In which aspects of our society and church today do we still trust in *size*?
5. What is the significance of the repetitions in Daniel 3 (seven groups of people, seven types of musical instruments)? Why is the whole machinery of the state assembled to deliver a uniform response? Obviously, Nebuchadnezzar believed that **power** would achieve his goal. Do we see trust in *power* in our society and church today? Why was Nebuchadnezzar so obsessed with compliance?
6. There are always those who eagerly point out non-compliance to people in power: "they do not serve the gods of Babylon, worship the golden image, yet *you* put them in charge..." (3:12) Why did Nebuchadnezzar believe that **conformity** would achieve his aim—everyone must express obedience and loyalty in the same way, with no exception? Is there a temptation to enforce *conformity* in today's society and church?
7. How does Revelation 13:11-17 portray another command, again punishable by death, to worship another image? How does Revelation 13 go beyond Daniel 3? What is the antecedent for the breath to the image so that it can speak (Genesis 2:7; 3:1; 1 Kings 18:38 – fire from heaven)
8. The focus of Wednesday's lesson is the story in Acts 12:1-17. James becomes a martyr, Peter is delivered. We are not told why (Abel & Enoch). How do you measure faith (Hebrews 11)? What are the results of comparing ourselves with others? Herod can persecute and execute, but God delivers; Passover ironically becomes what Passover was: God's act of liberating the enslaved. God opens the city gate for Peter, but Rhoda must open the house door for him!
9. The lesson on Thursday turns attention to the "mark of the beast" in Revelation 13. What can we learn from this about force, oppression, empire, choice and consent? The Seal of God and the mark of the beast are presented as mutually exclusive options for the earth's inhabitants. While the seal of God can only be placed "on the forehead" (Revelation 7:1; 14:1), the mark of the beast can be placed "on the right hand or on the forehead" (13:16; 14:9; 20:4). Why is this significant and what does it reveal about how God works?
10. Most humans prefer power to truth. We spend far more time and effort on trying to control the world (and the people in it) than on trying to understand them. Sadly, even when we try to understand the world, we usually do so in the hope that our understanding will make it easier to control people. And this is a problem not only in the political realm, but in the religious realm too! The biblical stories we looked at in this lesson show why coercion will not achieve what God is looking for.
11. As believers, how do we make sure that our response is not based on *size*, *power* or *conformity*? How can we be the community God wants us to be in these last days?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

So Daniel explains, and in chapter 3:5, 6, after the king has the explanation, he thinks he'd like to build an image entirely of gold, maybe to suggest that the golden part of that image would last forever, and Babylon would last forever. And then the burning fiery furnace and the threat, in 3:5, 6. Let's start, say, with 4:

The herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that when you hear the sound of the music, you are to fall down and worship. [And verse 6] Whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace."

What kind of evangelism is that? Here's the picture of god, the image, and if you don't get down and worship, you will be thrown into the burning fiery furnace. Has that method been pursued through the years? Have Christians ever used that method? Think of all the people who were tied to the stake, and they were threatened that if they didn't accept the religion that was being represented, they were to be burned. Even Paul used that method, didn't he, when he went out with fury to persecute and imprison the Christians? You see, many people have thought that the all-powerful God would appreciate this kind of firm, authoritative evangelism.

Well, after the experience of the three being thrown in, and then being marvelously preserved, and the king seeing this fourth Person, he's convinced that the God of Israel is a God to be reckoned with. So he tries a little evangelism in favor of the God of Israel. So look at verse 29. He hasn't changed his method:

"Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way."

Now, how's that? His methods have not changed. He now recognizes the God of Israel, but he's still using force. He still has a long way to go. You see, all he recognizes is that the God of Israel is not too weak. He's never seen a "god" rescue three young men in a burning fiery furnace before. He's impressed with God's power, so he uses power now to force submission and worship. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Daniel*, recorded February 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/39MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/40MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: Now, you did refer to this in the third message, this “mark of the beast.” And Seventh-day Adventists are notorious, or shall I say famous, or well-known, for emphasis upon the mark of the beast. It seems to be very important to the message. What is it? Would you say a bit more about that?

Graham: Well, since such dreadful things happen to those who have the mark, we had better know something about it. As you know, there are many, many different views. Fortunately, though, there will be opportunity next time, when we talk about Satan’s final effort to deceive, to go into this in more detail. In the meantime though, earlier in the book of Revelation it talks about God’s loyal people having a seal. It seems they have some mark of loyalty and trust. And I would make this comparable. There’s some indication that they prefer Satan’s lies to the truth. They have accepted him, the false Christ, as their redeemer. So we need to look for something that would be an appropriate mark.

I’m very impressed with, among the many, many meanings, if you research *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which you’ll find not just Seventh-day Adventists have done, many others too, the literal meaning is, “substitute for the Son of God,” which is exactly what Satan has wanted to be, substitute for the Son of God. But I’m more intrigued with the fact that you can find the very number, 666 back to the centuries and the millennia, connected with devil worship and other misrepresentations of the truth. The one thing sure, it is a mark of rejection of the truth, a preference for Satan’s side and loyalty to him, whatever it is. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #16 with Lou Venden, “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>*

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. . . . {CC 250.3}

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}

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}

Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day (MS 28, 1886). {7BC 974.3}

We can but look onward to new perplexities in the coming conflict, but we may well look on what is past as well as what is to come, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Samuel 7:12). "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25). The trial will not exceed the strength which shall be given us to bear it. {TDG 58.3}

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. It lights up the far-distant past, where human research seeks vainly to penetrate. In God's word we behold the power that laid the foundation of the earth and that stretched out the heavens. Here only can we find a history of our race unsullied by human prejudice or human pride. Here are recorded the struggles, the defeats, and the victories of the greatest men this world has ever known. 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}

The search for truth will reward the seeker at every turn, and each discovery will open up richer fields for his investigation. Men are changed in accordance with what they contemplate. If commonplace thoughts and affairs take up the attention, the man will be commonplace. If he is too negligent to obtain anything but a superficial understanding of God's truth, he will not receive the rich blessings that God would be pleased to bestow upon him. It is a law of the mind, that it will narrow or expand to the dimensions of the things with which it becomes familiar. {MYP 262.1}

The Lord Jesus came to our world full of mercy, life, and light, ready to save those who should come unto him. But he can save no one against his will. God does not force the conscience; he does not torture the body that he may compel men to compliance with his law. All this work is after the order of Satan. . . . But God deals with men after a different plan. He will give the sinner sufficient evidence to convict his conscience, and then if, of his own free will, he yields to the winning invitation of Jesus, he will receive the Spirit of God. Jesus pleads with the world, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." {YI, August 17, 1893 par. 2}

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. {4SP 362.1}

It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, who seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederated with evil angels sometimes bring suffering upon their fellow men in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. {AA 541.1}

It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare It to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. {DA 321.3}

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 soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. "Man turns from God, not God from him." Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests with the sinner. By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power. Thus he passes on from one stage of resistance to another, until at last the light will fail to impress, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. Then even "the light that is in thee" has become darkness. The very truth we do know has become so perverted as to increase the blindness of the soul. {MB 93.1}

The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does not lie in any sudden word or deed; it is the firm, determined resistance of truth and evidence (MS 30, 1890). {5BC 1093.1}

It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul. Thus it had been with these Jewish leaders. They were convinced that a divine power attended Christ, but in order to resist the truth, they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. In doing this they deliberately chose deception; they yielded themselves to Satan, and henceforth they were controlled by his power. {DA 322.2}

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 agency by which God protects His people is presented in the words of the psalmist: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Psalm 34:7. Said the Saviour, speaking of those that believe in Him: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father." Matthew 18:10. The angels appointed to minister to the children of God have at all times access to His presence. {GC 512.2}

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. Nor is such assurance given without need. If God has granted to His children promise of grace and protection, it is because there are mighty agencies of evil to be met—agencies numerous, determined, and untiring, of whose malignity and power none can safely be ignorant or unheeding. {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}

But God's servants are not to trust to themselves in this great emergency. The program of coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The world is not without a ruler; the Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own hands. . . . {CTr 316.5}

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}

He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His own 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 amid the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. {MB 121.1}

The third angel's message has been sent forth to the world, warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the Word of God. {7BC 979.12}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 13 *"Images of the End"*

Read for this week's study

Matthew 12:38–42; Jonah 3:5–10; Revelation 18:4; Daniel 5:1–31; Revelation 16:12–19;
2 Chronicles 36:22, 23.

Memory Text

"So he said to them, 'I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land' " (Jonah 1:9, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Reluctant Prophet
- III. A Work of Repentance
- IV. Belshazzar's Feast
- V. The Drying of the Euphrates
- VI. Cyrus, the Anointed
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "This week will be our final look at accounts that help elucidate our understanding of last-day events. This time we will look at the mission of Jonah to Nineveh; the fall of Babylon; and the rise of Cyrus, the Persian king who liberated God's people and enabled them to return to the land of promise." (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. "We must remember one thing for all these stories that appear to foreshadow last-day events: we must be careful to look at broad themes and allusions and not try to parse every detail to the point of creating prophetic absurdities. [...] We should not milk every detail in hopes of finding some hidden truth. Instead, we should look for the principles; and from these we can discover elements relevant for the last days." (Sabbath Afternoon) How do you know when your interpretation is "present truth" and when you are just "milking irrelevant details"?
3. Which parts of the story of Jonah does Jesus refer to as He addresses his contemporaries (Matthew 12:38–42)? (Sunday's lesson) Why do you think Jonah was a reluctant prophet and unwilling to go to Nineveh (cf. Nahum 3:1.3.19)? What

- are the similarities and differences between Jonah’s preaching to Nineveh and our preaching to spiritual Babylon (Revelation 18:4)?
4. Monday’s lesson focuses on the repentance of the people of Nineveh (3:5-10). Can we expect something similar in the last days, with the final message to the fallen world?
 5. Jonah obviously did not preach his best sermon in Nineveh (only five words in Hebrew, eight in English). It is almost as though he was trying to ensure their destruction, as there was no effort on his part. Yet the king of Nineveh and the entire city, including their cows, all repented in sorrow and ashes. For the second time in the book, the “evil pagans” show themselves to be more responsive and humble than God’s own prophet. What is the “present truth” lesson for us living in the last days?
 6. Tuesday’s lesson discusses Belshazzar’s feast, and that ignoring the events from Nebuchadnezzar’s life brought about his downfall (Daniel 5:22). Belshazzar commits sacrilege by desecrating the ‘temple vessels’. What are the equivalents of the ‘temple vessels’ in our own time? Daniel denounces Belshazzar for praising gods who ‘do not see or hear or know.’ What are the equivalents of such gods in our own secular age?
 7. How does Revelation 16:12–19 use Daniel 5:18–31 as a type for the fall of eschatological Babylon? (Wednesday’s lesson) Both Belshazzar in the past, and the end-time world population, are not caught by surprise merely because of ignorance of what God has predicted. The surprise is because they have chosen to disbelieve what God has said would happen. How can we avoid that in our lives?
 8. Because Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to their land and rebuild the temple, God calls him “His anointed” (Isa. 45:1, NKJV). (Thursday’s lesson) If God could use an imperfect pagan king in such a marked manner to do His will that he calls him his Messiah, what does it teach us about God using you and me in these last days?
 9. In what sense was Jesus greater than Jonah and Solomon (Matthew 12:38-42)? Jonah claims that he knew that God was compassionate and would find a way to forgive the Ninevites. You can almost hear the disgust in Jonah’s voice before he cuts off the conversation and prays that God would just kill him on the spot (Jonah 4:2-3). He would rather die than live with a God who forgives his enemies.
 10. When God speaks the final words of the book, he asks Jonah if humans are not more valuable than a plant. If God feels the same emotional intensity and concern for the city of Nineveh, full of thousands of people who have lost their way, is there anything wrong about it? The book ends with God asking Jonah for permission to show mercy to his enemies and their cows. But we do not know Jonah’s response.
 11. The purpose of the book of Jonah is to hold up a mirror to its readers. In Jonah, we see the worst parts of ourselves, which should generate humility and gratitude that God does love his enemies and puts up with the “Jonah” in all of us. Every time we

speaking about the prophecies, or judgment, it must be a message of good news about the wideness of God's love, which challenges us to the core.

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. {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>

Have you seen, very recently, those dates put up, or is it an embarrassment to us? Are we embarrassed that God would wait so long? Or are we proud of Him for doing so? Is He not this kind of a God? Are we more concerned about our reputation than we are about His? You see, the longer He waits, the better He looks. Now, we may not, especially if we have contributed to the delay. But so what if we are humbled by this thing! So, what's wrong with that? Nobody's saved by having faith in us. It's God who is to be trusted. If only we could make the shift—the good news is not about us. The good news is about God. And Paul says, "I'm very proud of that good news."

Now, true, indirectly we ought to be some good news, but ultimately we are all sinners, and we continue to come short. The good news is about God. And one of the best parts of the good news about Him is that He is not willing that any should perish. But He waits, and this kindness of God is meant to lead us to repentance, not to shame. So we ought to put the signs up, because if we put the signs and the dates up, who'd look good? We wouldn't, but He would. Are we willing to be embarrassed, that He might look good, or are we ashamed of this thing? Some are even wondering if maybe we've been looking at the wrong signs. Are we trying to save our own reputation? I think that's the impressive thing here. Jonah was more concerned about his own reputation than about God's. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series,

The Picture of God in All 66 – Obediah, Jonah, & Micah, recorded March 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/45MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/46MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

But now, when we speak of freedom, look at Daniel 10. What about this trying to force Cyrus to let the people go? That doesn't sound like freedom, does it? What did you do with that passage? In 10:13, 14, does that sound like freedom? In 13:

“The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days [says Gabriel. “I’ve been trying to persuade Cyrus for twenty-one days to let the people go, and he won’t let them go.”], but Michael [and you know the evidence that Michael is Christ. Michael], one of the chief princes, came to help me, so I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia, and came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.” [And having explained this, in verse 20 he says,] “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I am through with him, lo, the prince of Greece will come.”

Why, what kind of a man was Cyrus that he could resist Gabriel, the first of the angels, and he could almost resist the Son of God; but between the two of them, they twisted his arm enough so that finally he let the people go. That Cyrus was some man! Does this suggest that when the time has come, God will force us to fulfill His predictions? Well, was not Cyrus described earlier as the one who would let the people go? How do you understand that passage? If you take it literally to suggest that God will force people to do His will, He will force people to fulfill His prophecies when the time comes, then you have the interesting question of how little Cyrus could resist Gabriel, with all the power of the universe, as far as force is concerned, for God had authorized his coming. And Gabriel says, “Help: I cannot twist this man’s arm enough!” And God Himself, the Son of God, Michael, comes and helps Gabriel. What a man!

Why, this doesn't make any sense at all. There must be somebody else in there who has great persuasiveness and power. And guess who that would be. Would you understand this to mean that Satan, who all along had wanted to put God in a bad light, one of the best things he could do is to thwart God's purposes. And when, say, the seventy years are up, to try to block the fulfillment. Because if Israel had not gone home at the end of the seventy years, Satan could say, “Look! I told you so. He couldn't pull it off, could He?” That's what the heathen had been thinking—He couldn't protect His people, and now He can't get them home at the end of the seventy years. Who do you suppose was dedicated to keeping the people from going home?

Now, we know the great Controversy involves these powerful figures. Lucifer, the first of all the angels, is seeking to persuade Cyrus to vote no. And Satan *will* use force and deception. All these evil methods he will use. God will only use persuasion. Is it rather here that the forces of heaven were required to protect Cyrus from the forceful deception and power of the adversary, so that Cyrus would remain free, in the highest sense of freedom, to cast his own vote; yes, they may go home. How do you understand that passage? It's rather significant, I think, as we understand how God persuades. It looks like force, doesn't it? But if you take it literally, it makes quite some person out of Cyrus.

It would seem here that we have another occasion, when God is about to make His next move, and Satan is moving to oppose God. And once again Christ and Satan meet, in the Great Controversy. It's time for the people to go home, for the next event in the life of God's people. And as Satan tried to block their leaving Egypt, tried to block the birth of the Messiah by killing the boys in Egypt and by killing the boys in Bethlehem, and the death decree in the days of Esther. He has been doing this kind of thing. Now he's trying to block their going home. And even the Son of God, who is his primary opponent, comes down to protect Cyrus from the adversary, who uses all his power to overwhelm him, and leave Cyrus free to decide. Or, what do you think about that? How do you understand that? Anybody who's worked on this through the years? I think it's a passage one needs to reckon with. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Daniel, recorded February 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/39MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/40MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

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 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}

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}

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}

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}

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}

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}

Determined to efface the image of God in man, Satan works with an intensity of effort to hide God from view. Not openly does he work, but secretly, mingling the human and the divine, the spurious and the genuine, so seeking to bring confusion and distress. But in proportionate power divine mercy is revealed to counteract this wicked working, and bring to light the enemy’s hidden purposes. {TDG 308.5}

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}

Those upon whose actions hang the destinies of nations, are watched over with a vigilance that knows no relaxation by Him who "giveth salvation unto kings," to whom belong "the shields of the earth" (RH March 28, 1907). {4BC 1170.3}