

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2023: *Managing for the Master—Till He Comes*
Lesson 11 “Managing in Tough Times”

Read for this week’s study

2 Chronicles 20:1–22; 1 Chronicles 21:1–14; 2 Peter 3:3–12; 1 John 2:15–17; Revelation 13:11–17.

Memory Text

“Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me’ ” (Psalm 50:14, 15, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Putting God First
- III. Trust God, Not Your Own Resources
- IV. Time to Simplify?
- V. Priorities
- VI. When No One Can Buy or Sell
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The toils of life do take a lot of our daily focus. With debts to pay, children to raise, property to maintain, it does take time and thought. And, of course, we do need clothes, food, and shelter. [...] Amid trying times, when we need to lean on the Lord more than ever, there are some concrete steps, based on biblical principles, that we should follow.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What does it mean to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33)? Richard Foster reminds us that “the person who does not seek the kingdom first, does not seek it at all”. Thus, giving away all money or redistribution of the world’s wealth cannot be central. But seeking *first* God’s kingdom and His righteousness, both personal and social, must be central in our endeavor.
3. Sunday’s lesson discusses a singular historical event – Jehoshaphat’s war against a ‘vast army’ in 2 Chronicles 20:1-22. What spiritual principles can we learn from a historical event written in a historical book? If this is a recipe for gaining a victory,

- why was it not used later against Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 7:1-4)? How can we then apply those principles to our own walk with God in a completely different time and place?
4. What lesson are we to learn from another a historic event that happened only once – David’s numbering of Israel (1 Chronicles 21:1–14; cf. 2 Samuel 24:1-17 & Exodus 30:12)? (Monday’s lesson) How is this related to managing finances in difficult times, especially if in the previous lesson we were told that we should be making and periodically updating the balance sheet of our finances?
 5. Tuesday’s lesson invites us to consider the words of 2 Peter 3:3-12. How do they relate to managing our finances in light of the soon coming of Jesus? How do they apply on an individual and corporate level? How can this be easily abused, and people left disappointed if the second coming does not happen when they expect it? Why is it important to add other texts for a balanced picture? (e.g. Luke 19:13)?
 6. Why does Jesus present an either-or option in Matthew 6:24 (“You cannot serve God and wealth”)? (NRSV; Wednesday’s lesson). Notice the personification of “capital”. Jesus is speaking of a power which tried to be like God, which makes itself our master and has specific goals – to make us servants. Why is it significant that in certain social contexts we avoid speaking of money; while in other contexts people seem to feel that if the money question is resolved, all the problems of humankind will be resolved as well?
 7. What is the significance of financial matters and end-time persecution in Revelation 13:11-17? (Thursday’s lesson)
 8. How can money lose its seductive pulling power, and almost a sacred character, and once again become a material instrument? There is one act which profanes money by going directly against the law of money, an act for which money is not made. In the biblical view, the act of giving is seen as a consecration to God. Thus, it represents God’s grace breaking into the world of competition and selling. Giving to others not only robs money of its pulling quality, but functions as an imitation of God’s way, who as Creator, is always generously giving. It is God’s invitation to a life free from the intrusion of an anxiety producing power; greed is demolished and there is no fear of scarcity.
 9. What was the Old Testament model of giving (Deuteronomy 14-15)? What is the New Testament counterpart to it?

Further Study with Ellen White

God was the strength of Judah in this crisis, and He is the strength of His people today. We are not to trust in princes, or to set men in the place of God. We are to remember that human beings are fallible and erring, and that He who has all power is our strong tower of defense. In every emergency we are to feel that the battle is His. His resources are limitless, and apparent impossibilities will make the victory all the greater. {CC 217.5}

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}

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 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}

There is by our side a witness, a heavenly messenger, who will lift up for us a standard against the enemy. He will shut us in with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Beyond this Satan cannot penetrate. He cannot pass this shield of holy light. {COL 171.3}

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

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}

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

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

The Lord does not leave His wounded and bruised sheep to the power of Satan to be torn in pieces. He is ever strengthening His own when they are weak. He delivers the tried and tempted ones from the enemy's power. The Lord Jesus never forsakes any soul that puts his trust in Him. {UL 150.4}

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}

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. {CC 252.5}

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). {COL 69.2}

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

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. Satan lives, and is active, and every day we need to cry earnestly to God for help and strength to resist him. As long as Satan reigns we shall have self to subdue, besetments to overcome, and there is no stopping place, there is no point to which we can come and say we have fully attained. {1T 340.2}

To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion, a familiar friend. They have lived in close, constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts. {AG 358.3}

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}

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}

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. “They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” Malachi 3:17. If the blood of Christ’s faithful witnesses were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed sown to yield a harvest for God. Their fidelity would not be a testimony to convince others of the truth; for the obdurate heart has beaten back the waves of mercy until they return no more. If the righteous were now left to fall a prey to their enemies, it would be a triumph for the prince of darkness. Says the psalmist: “In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me.” Psalm 27:5. Christ has spoken: “Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.” Isaiah 26:20, 21. Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life. {GC 634.1}

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}

In the time of trouble, just previous to the coming of Christ, the lives of the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of holy angels. {3SG 196.1}