

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

#### Lesson 1 “Jesus Wins—Satan Loses”

#### Read for this week’s study

Revelation 12; Ephesians 5:25–27, 32; Philippians 3:9; Daniel 7:25; Isaiah 14:12–14; Revelation 13:14–17.

#### Memory Text

“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Battle in Heaven
- III. Satan’s Attack
- IV. Accepting Jesus’ Victory
- V. The Woman in the Wilderness
- VI. God’s End-time Remnant
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. When one studies fulfilled prophecies in the Bible carefully, one discovers that prophecy is often fulfilled in surprising or even unobtrusive ways. Jonah 3:4 predicts that in 40 days Nineveh will be “destroyed”. But the Hebrew word for “destroyed” is metaphorical. The root meaning is “turned upside down”. In what way was the prophecy actually fulfilled? (Quarter Introduction)
2. A core Seventh-day Adventist conviction is that the 2300 evenings and mornings of Daniel 8:13-14 cover the period of time from a Persian decree in 457 BC to the year AD 1844. Early Adventists assumed that the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 meant the earth. The “cleansing” of the sanctuary would be the destruction of the whole earth at the Second Coming of Christ. But no such thing happened in 1844. Taking a cue from prophecies like Jonah, they now understood that the end of the 2300 day/years involved two things: 1) Activity in heaven that is not directly observable

- from earth, and 2) the founding of an end-time movement that would preach the final gospel message to the world based on the book of Revelation (Rev 14:6-12, cf. Matt 24:14; Mark 13:10). But while Revelation 14:6-12 summarizes the final gospel message to the world, the message itself is much bigger than the content of that passage. (Quarter Introduction)
3. According to the lesson, the year 1844 is also significant for three reasons: 1) the birth of Friedrich Nietzsche, who provided the philosophical basis for current attacks against Christianity and Christian morality in the West, 2) the formulation of Marxist ideology, which provided a non-theistic approach to solving the world's problems, and 3) the date when Charles Darwin fully conceptualized the theory of evolution, undermining Christian views of human origins. So God raised up an end-time movement to counter the three destructive ideologies and help to heal the religious fractures of our time. (Quarter Introduction)
  4. The context of Revelation 14:6-12 is grounded in the introductory summary of Revelation 12-14 in Revelation 12:17. How are the two sides in the final conflict of earth's history described? What are the defining characteristics of each? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
  5. Read Revelation 12:7-9. Revelation 12:7 seems to follow verse 5 as a reaction to the male child's (presumably Jesus) ascension to heaven. What evidence is there to see this war in heaven as occurring much earlier? What kind of war is in view here? (Sunday's Lesson)
  6. Read Revelation 12:4-6, 9. With the help of Ephesians 5:25-27, 32 and Psalm 2:7-9, how would you define the main terms of Revelation 12 (dragon, woman, male child, rod of iron)? (Monday's Lesson)
  7. Read Revelation 12:10. What does it mean that the accuser of the brothers has been cast down? Read Revelation 12:11. What does it mean to overcome? How does the cross make that possible? (Tuesday's Lesson)
  8. Compare Revelation 12:6 with Revelation 12:14-16. What are the similarities and differences between the two accounts of the woman in the wilderness? On what basis do Adventists see the time periods here in terms of a year-day principle? Protestant interpreters have traditionally applied the work of the dragon here to the medieval church. How do we fit such negative assessments with the cosmic conflict and God's character of love? (Wednesday's Lesson)
  9. Read Revelation 12:17. What are the characteristics of God's last-day remnant in this verse? What other terms in Revelation seem also to apply to the remnant? What other characteristics of the remnant can be found in chapters 10-14? (Thursday's Lesson)
  10. In what ways is the cosmic conflict played out in our individual lives? In our country? In our church? (Friday's Lesson)

## Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The most important of all Seventh-day Adventist beliefs is the one that brings joy and assurance to Christians everywhere, the truth about our Heavenly Father that was confirmed at such cost by the life and the death of His Son. We believe that God is not the kind of Person His enemies have made Him out to be, arbitrary, unforgiving and severe. We accept the testimony of Jesus when He 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. 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. And like Abraham and Moses, the ones God spoke of as His trusted friends, we want to speak well and truly of our Heavenly Father. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from written material, "What We Believe".}

But let's say we're covered by the righteousness of Christ. How does that actually work? Here's the Father, here are a hundred million angels of Daniel 7 as the court sits in judgment and the books are opened. My case comes up, and I have a dreadful record. But I don't need to worry, because I am covered with the righteousness of Christ, and fortunately God does not have 20/20 vision, and doesn't know the secret about what's inside! Jesus knows what's inside, and I'm sure my guardian angel knows what's inside, and the accuser of the brethren knows what's inside. In fact, he accuses me day and night before God and says, "Do you want to know what's inside? If God looks, does he say, "Nah, looks pretty good to me." I don't like the thought that I'm somehow sneaking into the kingdom in disguise. Someday God might learn the truth about me. If I am not changed inside, I'm not safe to have around. So this obviously is not for purposes of disguise. God knows. He knows me just as well as anybody else in the Godhead.

God says, "I not only forgive you, but I will treat you as if you had never sinned. In fact, I will treat you with dignity and respect, as if you'd always been my loyal children." To be covered with the righteousness of Christ is not a disguise. It means we'll be treated as if we had lived as righteously as the Son.

So, covered with the righteousness of Christ: What does it mean? I take it to mean that because Christ answered all the problems, he's not asking me to do it. He's asking me, "Do you want to respond to these answers, like the loyal angels have? Have you been won back to trust me? Are you willing to listen? If so, I can heal the damage done." And even though I am a pretty sick patient in my heavenly Father's eyes, God will treat me with dignity and respect, as if I had lived as nobly as his Son. I think that's the covering. I mean, he would really do this. He will treat me with dignity, and with respect, as if I had never been disloyal.

That's a statement. I'd want evidence for that. How about his treatment of the woman taken in adultery? Look at the way he treated her and sought to recover her dignity and self-respect. Look at the way he treated Peter and other people through the scriptures. He really does it. In fact, he even treats "unsavable" sinners with dignity and respect. Look at Judas. He covered for him, so that when Judas went out to betray his Lord, the disciples thought he went out to make an offering to feed the poor. {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)

"Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not reckon his sin." Now who is God willing to treat like that? To whom is God willing to say, "I'll never raise up your past again; don't worry about it. I'm not worried about it. I want to treat you as my Son. I want to treat you as if you've been loyal all your life, as loyal as Jesus my Son."

God says all these things to encourage us not to worry about our sinful past. What do we have to do to realize that God wants to treat us like that? Isn't it just to trust him? To trust him that he is forgiveness personified.

When that righteousness of Christ is "reckoned to us," it's not some kind of book balancing thing. It's God trying to find ways to explain to us how he's willing to treat us—as if we had never left his side at all, as if we had always been there as trusting children. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 4, recorded October 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*  
<http://pkp.cc/7MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/8MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

### **Recommended Listening:**

The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel's Messages is available at:  
<http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 "God's Last Pleading with His Children" is available at:  
<http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

### **Recommended Reading:**

*Conversations about God* Chapter 16—"God's Last Pleading with His Children"

## Further Study with Ellen White

Evil originated with Lucifer, who rebelled against the government of God. Before his fall he was a covering cherub, distinguished by his excellence. God made him good and beautiful, as near as possible like Himself (RH Sept. 24, 1901). {4BC 1163.1}

The teaching of this parable [of the sower] 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 him. 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. {UL 77.5}

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}

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}

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}

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

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}

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}

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

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}

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

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. "The truth shall make you free;" and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one's self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is "the law of liberty." James 2:12. {DA 466.5}

God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve. {PK 510.4}

Had Christ come in His divine form, humanity could not have endured the sight. The contrast would have been too painful, the glory too overwhelming. Humanity could not have endured

the presence of one of the pure, bright angels from glory; therefore Christ took not on Him the nature of angels; He came in the likeness of men. {5BC 1131.1}

When one surrenders to Christ, the mind is brought under the control of the law; but it is the royal law, which proclaims liberty to every captive. By becoming one with Christ, man is made free. Subjection to the will of Christ means restoration to perfect manhood. {MH 131.1}

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

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}

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. Then the prevarications and accusations of him who had once been an exalted angel were seen in their true light. It was seen that his professedly spotless character was deceptive. His deeply laid scheme to exalt himself to supremacy was fully discerned. His falsehoods were apparent to all. God's authority was forever established. Truth triumphed over falsehood. {RC 60.3}

The heavenly universe had witnessed the weapons that were chosen by the Prince of life—the words of Scripture, "It is written"; and the weapons used by the prince of the world—falsehood and deception. They had seen the Prince of life deal in straightforward lines of truth, honesty, and integrity, while the prince of the world exercised his power of cunning, artful secrecy, intrigue, enmity, and revenge. They had seen the One who bore the banner of truth sacrifice everything, even His life, to maintain truth, while the one who bore the banner of rebellion continued to strengthen his accusations against the God of truth. {RC 60.5}

All who will can be overcomers. Let us strive earnestly to reach the standard set before us. 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}

The rabbis had a saying that there is rejoicing in heaven when one who has sinned against God is destroyed; but Jesus taught that to God the work of destruction is a strange work. That in which all heaven delights is the restoration of God's own image in the souls whom He has made. {COL 190.1}

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

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}