

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 5 “The Good News of the Judgment”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 14:7; Psalm 51:1–4; Revelation 20:12; Daniel 7:9, 14, 26; Revelation 4:2–4; Revelation 5:1–12.

Memory Text

“Saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’ ”
(Revelation 14:7, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Significance of the Judgment Hour
- III. God’s Mercy and Judgment
- IV. A Magnificent Scene
- V. A Glimpse of Heaven
- VI. Jesus Is Worthy
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Revelation 14:7. Who is being judged in this text, God, the human race, or both? See also Romans 3:4. In response to this text the lesson states “God is a God of judgment.” What is judgment? How do you reconcile the Bible’s emphasis on judgment with a gracious God? What does judgment tell us about God? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Revelation 14:7 again. What does judgment have to do with the everlasting gospel (Rev 14:6)? How does judgment fit in to Revelation’s theme of a cosmic conflict over the character and government of God? In what form do you think the heavenly records are kept? Read Psalm 51:1-4. What implications does this text have for the judgment? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Read Revelation 20:12. What is the basis for the judgment? What do our actions reveal about us? In what way is justification by faith compatible with judgment according to works? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Daniel 7:9-13. What did Daniel see in these verses? According to the lesson, Revelation announces that the hour of judgment has come. The book of Daniel reveals when that judgment began. According to Daniel 7:26-27, what is the final result of this end-time judgment? According to Daniel 7, earthly kingdoms come and go, but God's kingdom is everlasting. What evidence do we have to trust in that assertion? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Revelation 4:2-4. What similarities do you find with the judgment scene of Daniel 7? What are some differences between the two accounts? Who are the 24 elders mentioned in Revelation 4? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Revelation 5:1-6. If this is a picture of judgment, who is being judged here? Read Revelation 5:7-12. How does all of heaven respond to the Lamb's taking up of the scroll? What does the scroll represent? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. How should the knowledge that we are living during the final judgment affect our daily lives? What about judgment is good news rather than bad news? (Friday's Lesson)
8. What does the concept of God's judgment teach us about the character of God? (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>

Can you imagine a scene of several of us admitted into heaven over the Father's protest? And we're declaring, "But he just doesn't understand!" Well, we're destroying the whole structure of our happiness and security for eternity, if this is true. Jesus said I will not intercede with the Father for you. Why? He gives the reason. For the Father himself loves you, just as much as I do. That is, there's no need. And Goodspeed, in 1923, way back then, has a very venturesome rendering, which doesn't go beyond the Greek. "There is no need for me to intercede with the Father for you, for the Father loves you himself." Stunning. But think of the implications here. In the Bible we have intercession, priestly intercession, all the way along, don't we? Just as we have judgment pictures all the way along, and then Jesus says, "You know, I won't be your judge. The Father won't be your judge. The word will be your judge." Then why did you give us these other pictures? "It's what you needed, until I could tell you. There's nothing arbitrary in this. You'll be judged by whether or not you've responded to the truth and have been won back to faith." That's the judgment! {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of

God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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

But “under the demands of law.” That belongs to a very legal conception of what has gone wrong in the universe, which we discussed in our second conversation. That what has gone wrong is that we have “broken the rules,” and the law demands that God execute us for breaking the rules. And Jesus died so that somehow God could justly forgive us even though we have broken the rules. I don’t think we have been able to make too much sense out of that. But it goes along with the other one, “satisfying justice.” Whose justice? I have friends who say, “If God does not give Idi Amin several days in the fire, I will not regard Him as a just God.” They have that feeling about the satisfaction of justice. And I think they really mean it, and I would respect them for that. I would love to relieve them of that burden. If I want to know why Jesus died, I should go right to the cross and watch Him die and hear His cry and see how the Father is involved, and then fit that back into Scripture. I don’t see Him fulfilling the requirements of a legal model. {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:*

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There are some who say, “There is no need to reveal the righteousness of God. That’s a given. All we need are the methods and the steps He’s used to set us right.” But then they use the wrong methods. It’s by presenting the truth about God. “This is what God is like.”

And you use all sixty-six books for that. Look at all the evidence as to what God is like. Does he want to be served from fear? What does he do to his wayward children? We have to explain that. What about his wrath, and the destruction of the wicked? He has to explain that in order to win us back to trust, and the kind of obedience that God desires, that springs not from fear, or law, but from love, trust, and admiration. God’s way is to tell the truth about himself. But God has been judged as being untrue and unrighteous. And Paul says, “God, may you be shown to be right in what you have said and win your case when you take it into court.” “When Thou art judged” in the Greek can be translated “when you take it into court”.

Did anyone drag God into court? Or would he have to take his own case into court? If God’s in court, he took himself there. Nobody has power to drag him into court. So I love the translation “and win your case when you take it into court.” Has God won his case? Do you see the court, by the way? Daniel 7— A hundred million watch when the court sits in judgment and the books are opened. How about in Job? Is not God on trial there? Isn’t he accused of being

untrustworthy, in Job? Think of other places. The universe has been judging God. He has invited his children to examine and investigate his character and his government, for he has been accused. In the Garden of Eden he was accused. Think of other places. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Romans, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/61MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/62MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

The most important thing for us, though, as we read Daniel, what does it say about God that he would do this so publicly? A hundred million watching! Well, hasn't the Great Controversy been conducted in public? It's this very openness of God that wins to faith and trust. And he even allows the opposition to speak. Look how long he allowed his adversary to speak against him, personally. Think of the Infinite One allowing a finite creature to mount a great rebellion against him, and insinuate all these evil things about our God. He allowed it, because it's the only way to win to genuine trust.

You cannot use force, or the hiding of evidence. God doesn't have to blot out several minutes from the tape of the history of the universe to win his case. There's no cover-up here. It's all in public. God even says, "And I'll provide the books." Think of it! It's all out in open. And Satan accuses us before God. And Christ in his human form arises, and when Christ arises he does not excuse our sins. They're history. But then he does say, "But the devil thinks we're going to admit people to the Kingdom on the basis of these records of their sinful past. I'm not concerned about a man's sinful past. I'm only concerned about the kind of person he is now. Now if the devil wants to go back and cite all the sins of David that we've read through, he can present a lurid case against that friend of mine. But I would like to refer you to the fifty-first Psalm. In spite of those terrible things David did, in the end of his life he asked for a new heart and a right spirit, and I gave it to him. I'm not going to judge David on the record of his sinful past. As a matter of fact," Jesus could say, "that record that the devil wants to use, legalist that he is, is irrelevant, immaterial, and out of date. I want to tell you that David died with a new heart and a right spirit, and I recommend him as safe to save."

You imagine the devil making a case that Manasseh would not be safe to save. And Ellen White has him make a speech there that's most stirring, where he cites the sins that he's tempted people to commit, and then charges them against them, and says, "God, how can you save these people? Look at the sins that have marked their lives, behold the record here," he says. "Look at their unlikeness to Christ. Their malice, their hatred of one another. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them." He says, "God, are you going to save these, when you banish me and those who united with me from your presence? Have they not committed

the same sins?” And all this is true, you see. {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)

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

Conversations About God #9 “There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God” is available at: <http://pkp.cc/9MMCAG>

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

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 9—“There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God”

Conversations about God Chapter 16—“God’s Last Pleading with His Children”

Further Study with Ellen White

God, the One infinite and all-wise, sees the end from the beginning, and in dealing with evil His plans were far-reaching and comprehensive. It was His purpose, not merely to put down the rebellion, but to demonstrate to all the universe the nature of the rebellion. God’s plan was unfolding, showing both His justice and His mercy, and fully vindicating His wisdom and righteousness in His dealings with evil. {PP 78.3}

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

God could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government, claiming that God was not just in imposing laws upon the angels; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was

seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. It was therefore necessary to demonstrate before the inhabitants of heaven, and of all the worlds, that God's government is just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper and his real object must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works. {PP 42.1}

The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore God permitted him to demonstrate the nature of his claims, to show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked. {PP 42.2}

Even when he was cast out of heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since only the service of love can be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of the worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted out of existence, some would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond all question. {PP 42.3}

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. {PP 42.4}

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}

Each law of God is an enactment of mercy, love, and saving power. These laws, obeyed, are our life, our salvation, our happiness, our peace [Psalm 119:165 quoted] (Letter 112, 1902). {3BC 1153.6}

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}

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}

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name, "—"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, "—" that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." 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. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-

sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which “seeketh not her own” has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19.2}

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}

It was a being of wonderful power and glory that had set himself against God. Of Lucifer the Lord says, “Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.” Ezekiel 28:12. Lucifer had been the covering cherub. He had stood in the light of God’s presence. He had been the highest of all created beings, and had been foremost in revealing God’s purposes to the universe. After he had sinned, his power to deceive was the more deceptive, and the unveiling of his character was the more difficult, because of the exalted position he had held with the Father. {DA 758.4}

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}

And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator. {SC 79.1}

Christ made full provision for the prosecution of the work entrusted to the disciples, and took upon Himself the responsibility of its success. So long as they obeyed His word, and worked in connection with Him, they could not fail. Go to all nations, He bade them. Go to the farthest part of the habitable globe, but know that My presence will be there. Labor in faith and confidence, for the time will never come when I will forsake you. {8T 16.3}

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}

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. No one who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. It is true that Satan is a powerful being; but, thank God, we have a mighty Saviour, who cast out the evil one from heaven. {MH 94.3}

Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and claim the promises of God. Cherubim and seraphim and angels that excel in strength—ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands—stand at His right hand, "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Hebrews 1:14. {COL 176.3}

God has angels whose whole work is to draw those who shall be heirs of salvation. Whenever one takes a step toward Jesus, Jesus is taking steps toward him. The angels' work is to keep back the powers of Satan (MS 17, 1893). {7BC 922.5}

The angels of glory find their joy in . . . giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know. {ML 307.7}

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}