

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 10 “Satan’s Final Deceptions”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 12:9; Revelation 16:13, 14; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Ezekiel 8:16; Ezekiel 20:1–20; Revelation 18:4, 5.

Memory Text

“ ‘Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth’ ” (John 17:17, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Way That Seems Right in a Man’s Eyes
- III. The Old Lie of Immortality
- IV. Babylon: The Center of Sun Worship
- V. A Call to Faithfulness
- VI. Grace for Obedience
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In this week’s lesson, we will continue looking, not only at Babylon’s deceptions but at Jesus’ plan to save us from them and the death that they would otherwise bring.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson discusses the role of deception in the end time. What is the significance of Jesus’ words in Matthew 24:23-28 (cf. 6-10)?
3. Monday’s lesson looks at Revelation 16:13, 14 and 18:2, 23. What was the role of miracles at the time of Moses, Elijah, and Jesus and His disciples? What role do miracles play in the last days (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)? What is the purpose of the “holding back” period (2:6-8)? What are the implications of all this for our spiritual life and experiencing God’s presence and mighty works in everyday life?
4. What was so attractive for the Israelites in sun worship (cf. Ezekiel 8:16 and 2 Kings 23:5, 11)? (Tuesday’s lesson) What did God want to teach the Israelites by turning the sanctuary around? What does “going east of Eden” mean in the book of Genesis (cf. Revelation 16:12)? What cultural realities of today’s world are universally “worshipped” without being questioned by the majority?

5. Wednesday's lesson looks at Ezekiel 20:1–20 as a call to faithfulness. The original message was for people in Babylonian exile. What would a call to faithfulness look like in today's world? What might be the "idols of Egypt" and "Babylon" today? It is easy to make a long list of evils to be denounced. But the second angel's message is "good news". Is there a way to express this in a positive and motivating context, rather than denouncing things and people?
6. What comfort can we draw from Revelation 18:4, 5? (Thursday's lesson) Revelation 14 is the positive side of the negative story of Revelation 13. Babylon is used six times in Revelation. (Remember that numbers in the book of Revelation mean primarily quality rather than quantity!) It stands for "restlessness" and "falling short". What starts promising as "the gate of God" ends up in disappointing "confusion" (Genesis 11:1-9).
7. It is important to proclaim the true gospel (the first message) but also to be aware of the false gospel (the second message). The ultimate solution is not from an institution; those who live under the monstrous (Babylonian) rule can now hear the "good news". Yes, *the system is broken*, but God is going to repair all the damage. Observation alone could bring Israelites at the time of Babylonian exile and Christians in the first century Roman empire to an obvious conclusion that "pagan gods" are more powerful than Yahweh.
8. Thus comes the heavenly message: "Your God reigns!" He will rescue his people, he did not abandon the covenant, but he will do it through the work of a "servant", not the Babylonian way through might and power (Zechariah 4:6). You are free to go home! (Isaiah 52:7-9)
9. "Your God is coming back!" When Babylonians attacked the temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 1:1-2), it seemed that God had abandoned Israel. But now he will return, publicly and visibly (Isaiah 52:8; 40:5).
10. "God is doing a powerful and public work of rescue!" (52:10) He did when Jesus died on the cross (53:7) and all nations will now see it and benefit from it (cf. Revelation 18:4-5). In what way we can see and benefit from what God is doing *in us; through us and around us*? Because that's what the second angel's message is all about!

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

To some of us, the most important information we have to share with our fellow human beings around this planet is this truth about the way God runs his universe and what He wants of His children. We need to share this more urgently than ever before as we humans, all together, face the closing events of human history. Because before Christ returns, the Bible describes—in fact Jesus describes—a time of confusion and deception such as the world has never seen.

All of that will be leading up to Satan's final attempt to win the whole world to worship *him*, to trust *him*. He even asked Jesus to get down on His knees and worship him in the wilderness of temptation. Revelation 13 says that when Satan's campaign is over, the whole world *will* be

worshiping him, except those few who have not been deceived. So it should not surprise us, if we are as near the End as we believe we are, that we find ourselves surrounded on all sides by conflicting claims to religious authority. Certainly the development of modern media has made us more aware of this than ever before. As we see and listen to all these conflicting claims, how often they are supported by position, or power, or miracles, or claims of special communications from the Lord.

How Satan would enjoy it if he could turn God's friends on this planet against their heavenly Father! Or even more seriously, how he would love to deceive God's friends even as they continue professing to be His commandment-keeping people. That would be the most destructive. No wonder Paul said that we should grow up and not be so easily swayed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4). Again in Hebrews 5 he says we should grow up and have our faculties trained by practice to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7, "The Question of Authority" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>*

Look at the next passage, in 2 Corinthians 11:13:

God's messengers [he raises a question]? They are counterfeits of the real thing, dishonest practitioners masquerading as the messengers of Christ. Nor do their tactics surprise me when I consider how Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light [he still pretends to be Lucifer, you know, the bearer of light and truth]. It is only to be expected that his angels will have the appearance of ministers of righteousness. Phillips

This of course, reminds us of Christ's most serious words, perhaps, that He ever spoke. And He spoke them to a group of very devout Sabbath-keeping, tithe-paying, Bible teachers in His day. Who, Bible students that they were, had just denounced Jesus' picture of His Father as satanic. Think of it! Sabbath-keepers, tithe-payers, Bible teachers telling Christ He had a devil. And He turned to them and uttered those extraordinary words in John 8:44, 45. And you can be sure there were tears in His voice when He said something like this:

The father whose sons you are [you Bible teachers] is the devil, and you are bent on carrying out the wishes of your father. He proved himself a murderer at the very beginning, and did not loyally stand by the truth; in fact, there is no spark of truth in him. Whenever he gives utterance to his falsehood, then he gives expression to his real character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. I, on the contrary, speak the truth, and therefore you do not believe me.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7, “The Question of Authority” recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>

Satan who deceived even brilliant angels should find it easy to deceive us, and he’s even more experienced now than he was then. If it ever was essential to be demanding of evidence, to be transformed by the renewing of our minds that we may test and prove what is the truth, what is good as distinguished from what is not, isn’t this the time? This is the time when we will witness Satan’s last attempt to deceive and confuse, and with all the experience of the past he will focus all his endeavors on the few who persist in believing the truth and trusting God. We will see something worse than has ever been seen in the whole history of the universe. And somehow one group will survive, they will not be deceived. They will succeed in doing what a third of the brilliant angels failed to do. They will have their minds renewed. For religion to make light of mind, reason, intellect— it’s true they’ve been abused of course, but to make light of these is to play into the devil’s hands in these last days, and to set us up vulnerable and gullible when he comes as Christ. And when he makes all his claims and performs miracles to prove that he is Christ, we’d better be in this state of mind.

In fact, to be so dedicated to the truth, to be so concerned that we may discern the truth is an act of worship, it suggests here. Isn’t that true? What would please God more than to see people on this planet absolutely dedicated to evidence and truth? That we’re most eager to discern the truth from the false and we do not wish to be deceived. We wish to see God as he is that we may worship him aright and do the things that please him. I mean, this is an act of worship. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 12, recorded January 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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

On the other hand, the Second Coming is as near as our last moment of breath. And that’s why I think of it at funerals. When a loved one dies, especially if he or she has been ill and in pain, the next moment of consciousness that person is face to face with the Lord at the Second Coming. And I love that Thessalonians passage which says if someone dies before the Lord comes and they feel maybe they have missed something? No. Thessalonians says, “They will arise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord.”

So the main thing is, more important than knowing when the end comes, is to trust God. And if I should die tonight, I want to die His trusting child, because then I will arise His trusting child. I’ll have no complaints. We’ll all have lots of questions. We might even say, “I kind of wanted to

live through that.” I think Paul did. Remember there, Paul said, “I’m torn between staying with you to help you and my desire to depart and be with the Lord.” He didn’t believe in the immortality of the soul. He knew that as a Roman citizen, when his head was cut off with that sharp sword, the next instant of consciousness he’d be face to face with the One he’d been preaching about with such pride. So he had no complaints.

So the end is really very, very near. Especially in a medical center like this when we see folk come to the end of their lives all the time, sometimes very sad. We have good news for them, “You fall asleep tonight; you will wake up the next moment from a dreamless sleep face to face with the Lord.” That’s how near it is. But I believe the big event is also near. {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>*

We usually use 1 John 3:4, and we usually translate that, “Sin is the transgression of the law.” But that’s a rather expansive translation of one word. And it tempts one to put the Ten Commandments up on the wall and say, “Well, I haven’t broken that one, and that one, and that one, and that one, so this has been a rather good day.” Paul used to look down the Ten, and on a Tuesday night when he knelt to pray, he could say, “This has been a good day. I haven’t murdered anybody. I haven’t committed adultery today. I haven’t stolen today. I haven’t broken the Sabbath, because it was Tuesday anyway. I thank Thee, Lord, I am not like this publican over here.” And then he looked at the tenth, and he realized he had been breaking them. Because sin in 1 John 3:4, is not “the transgression of the Law.” The Greek says “sin is lawlessness.” Sin is a state of mind. It’s an attitude. And that’s what is here. “Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, to him it is rebelliousness.” “*Lawlessness*” is the literal Greek word in 1 John 3:4. Moreover, when you think of the fact that it’s God who has told us what to do, and everything he has asked us to do is for our best good, and if we do not do it, that suggests distrust. And you remember in Romans 14, the last verse: “Whatever is not of faith and trust is sin.”

Sin is a breach of trust. And I think we would protect ourselves from a rather mechanical understanding—or *misunderstanding* of sin, if we put these three verses together instead of one. Romans 14, James 4 and 1 John 3. “Sin is lawlessness.” “Sin is knowing what you ought to do but not doing it.” “Sin is a breach of trust.” And I think they’re all in harmony there, aren’t they? You could even put Malachi with it: “Cursed be the cheat.” Not that God hates cheats. He just can’t help cheats. He can’t save and heal cheats. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – 1 & 2 Peter and James*, recorded July 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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

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>

Conversations About God #17 "Satan's Final Effort to Deceive" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/17MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

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

Conversations about God Chapter 17—"Satan's Final Effort to Deceive"

Further Study with Ellen White

There was no possible hope for the redemption of those who had witnessed and enjoyed the inexpressible glory of heaven, and had seen the terrible majesty of God, and, in presence of all this glory, had rebelled against Him. There were no new and wonderful exhibitions of God's exalted power that could impress them so deeply as those they had already experienced. If they could rebel in the very presence of glory inexpressible, they could not be placed in a more favorable condition to be proved. There was no reserve force of power, nor were there any greater heights and depths of infinite glory to overpower their jealous doubts and rebellious murmuring (*Redemption: The Temptation of Christ*, pp. 18, 19). {4BC 1163.3}

Eve really believed the words of Satan, but her belief did not save her from the penalty of sin. She disbelieved the words of God, and this was what led to her fall. In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth. {PP 55.2}

From the opening of the great controversy in heaven, Satan has maintained his cause through deception; and Christ has been working to unveil his schemes and to break his power. {DA 210.2}

God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them and admire His handiwork. As we study His works, angels from heaven will be by our side to enlighten our minds and guard them from Satan's deceptions. {CT 457.1}

Go to God for yourselves, pray for divine enlightenment, that you may know that you do know what is truth, that when the wonderful miracle-working power of Satan shall be displayed, and

the enemy shall come as an angel of light, you may distinguish between the genuine work of God and the imitative work of the powers of darkness. {RH, December 24, 1889 par. 11}

The manifestation of God's love, His mercy and His goodness, and the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart to enlighten and renew it, place us, through faith, in so close connection with Christ that, having a clear conception of His character, we are able to discern the masterly deceptions of Satan. {5T 744.2}

In the last days he [Satan] will appear in such a manner as to make men believe him to be Christ come the second time into the world. He will indeed transform himself into an angel of light. But while he will bear the appearance of Christ in every particular, so far as mere appearance goes, it will deceive none but those who . . . are seeking to resist the truth.—5T 698. {TA 270.4}

Satan's policy in this final conflict with God's people is the same that he employed in the opening of the great controversy in heaven. He professed to be seeking to promote the stability of the divine government, while secretly bending every effort to secure its overthrow. And the very work which he was thus endeavoring to accomplish he charged upon the loyal angels. {GC 591.1}

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}

Christ taught His disciples how to meet the deceptive work of Satan and his followers. Under a variety of symbols the Saviour presented the work of extending His kingdom of truth and righteousness throughout the world. It is by teaching the truth that we are to defeat the purposes of Satan. Christ illustrated this work in the parable of the sower. . . . {UL 77.4}

There is one safeguard against Satan's deceptions and snares, that is the truth as it is in Jesus. The truth planted in the heart, nourished by watchfulness and prayer, nourished by the grace of Christ, will give us discernment. The truth must abide in the heart, be felt in its power in spite of all the alluring enchantments of Satan, and your experience and mine must be that the truth can purify, guide, and bless the soul. . . . {TMK 301.4}

Popular theology represents the righteous dead as in heaven, entered into bliss and praising God with an immortal tongue; but Hezekiah could see no such glorious prospect in death. With his words agrees the testimony of the psalmist: "In death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?" "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." Psalm 6:5; 115:17. {GC 546.1}

Christ represents death as a sleep to His believing children. Their life is hid with Christ in God, and until the last trump shall sound those who die will sleep in Him. {FLB 175.5}

Many thought that Lazarus would have some wonderful experience to relate. They were surprised when he told them nothing. But Lazarus had nothing to tell. The pen of Inspiration has given light upon this subject. "The dead know not anything. ... Their love, and their hatred, ... is now perished" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6). {TDG 149.3}

The Life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection, and until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name. By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead (Letter 65a, 1894). {4BC 1143.5}

Christ is coming with power and great glory. He is coming with His own glory, and with the glory of the Father. And the holy angels will attend Him on His way. While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing. The unsullied light will shine from His splendor, and Christ the Redeemer will be admired by all who have served Him. While the wicked flee, Christ's followers will rejoice in His presence. {SD 357.3}

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

Our trust must be wholly in God. He will be to us a present help in every time of need. Let us wait upon the Lord and exercise faith in His promises. He will hear us. Only believe. The Captain of our salvation will not leave us to guide our own bark. We shall have His help and His wisdom just when He sees we need it.—Letter 24, Dec. 18, 1882, to W. C. White. {TDG 361.6}

The character of God as revealed by Christ invites our faith and love, for we have a Father whose mercy and compassion fail not. At every step of our journey heavenward He will be with us to guide in every perplexity, to give us help in every temptation. {HP 16.4}

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

When God gave His Son to the world, He made it possible for men and women to be perfect by the use of every capability of their beings to the glory of God. In Christ He gave to them the riches of His grace, and a knowledge of His will. As they would empty themselves of self, and learn to walk in humility, leaning on God for guidance, men would be enabled to fulfill God's high purpose for them. {AG 230.2}

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

Battles are to be fought every day. A great warfare is going on over every soul, between the prince of darkness and the Prince of life. There is a great battle to be fought, . . . but you are not to do the main fighting here. As God's agent you are to yield yourselves to Him, that He may plan and direct and fight the battle for you, with your co-operation. The Prince of life is at the head of His work. He is to be with you in your daily battle with self, that you may be true to principle; that passion, when warring for the mastery, may be subdued by the grace of Christ; that you come off more than conqueror through Him that hath loved us. Jesus has been over the ground. He knows the power of every temptation. He knows just how to meet every emergency, and how to guide you through every path of danger. {SD 160.3}

He who has given His precious life because He loved you, and wanted you to be happy, will be a Captain who will always be mindful of your interest. {SD 160.4}

Though the Egyptians had so long rejected the knowledge of God, the Lord still gave them opportunity for repentance. In the days of Joseph, Egypt had been an asylum for Israel; God had been honored in the kindness shown His people; and now the long-suffering One, slow to anger, and full of compassion, gave each judgment time to do its work; the Egyptians, cursed through the very objects they had worshiped, had evidence of the power of Jehovah, and all who would, might submit to God and escape His judgments. The bigotry and stubbornness of the king resulted in spreading the knowledge of God, and bringing many of the Egyptians to give themselves to His service. {PP 333.2}

Those who walk even as Christ walked, who are patient, gentle, kind, meek and lowly in heart, those who yoke up with Christ and lift His burdens, who yearn for souls as He yearned for them—these will enter into the joy of their Lord. They will see with Christ the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Heaven will triumph, for the vacancies made in heaven by the fall of Satan and his angels will be filled by the redeemed of the Lord (RH May 29, 1900). {7BC 949.2}

Sanctification means habitual communion with God. There is nothing so great and powerful as God's love for those who are His children. {HP 129.5}

To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the

lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. {Mar 244.5}

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages, a perpetual testimony to the nature and terrible results of sin. 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 and His law 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 intelligences, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its punishment. {4BC 1162.6}

After He had created our world and man, He looked upon the work that He had done, and pronounced it very good. And when the foundation of the earth was laid, the foundation of the Sabbath was laid also. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. In giving the Sabbath, God considered man's spiritual and physical health. {TM 136.1}

"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. The law reveals sin to us, and causes us to feel our need of Christ, and to flee unto Him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . {6BC 1110.3}

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. {6BC 1110.4}

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. {6BC 1110.5}