

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

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

### Lesson 13 “Ablaze With God’s Glory”

#### Read for this week’s study

1 Thessalonians 5:1–6; John 8:32; Revelation 18:1; Revelation 4:11; Exodus 33:18, 19; Revelation 5:6, 12; Revelation 13:8.

#### Memory Text

“After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory” (Revelation 18:1, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. Preparing for the Final Crisis
- III. Knowing Truth
- IV. The Reformation Continues
- V. God’s Glory Fills the Earth
- VI. The Lamb, the Slain Lamb
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “God has raised up the Seventh-day Adventist Church to preach this [three angels’] message to the world. Thus, we need, ourselves, to be converted to the truth as it is in Jesus, and to have been transformed and made new by the ‘everlasting gospel’ of Revelation 14:6, which is centered on Christ’s death for us, the assurance of our salvation in Him.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson looks at ‘Preparing for the Final Crisis’ focusing on 1 Thessalonians 5:1–6. What is the significance of the ‘day of the Lord’? (Genesis 2:3 cf. 2:4) What are the ‘times and the seasons’? (Daniel 2:21; Acts 1:7) Paul uses the metaphor of ‘thief in the night’. Jesus also used that metaphor (Matthew 24:42-43; Luke 12:35-40 cf. Revelation 3:3; 16:15). If the believers are “in the know”, why does Paul need to make a correction in his second letter to the Thessalonians? (2:1-12) What does this teach us about suddenness, expectancy and surprise?

3. How do you understand Jesus' words that "the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32; 7:17; 17:17)? What does it mean that 'the truth shall set you free'? What does it mean to be "free" in this context?
4. "The message of the second angel appeals to us to accept truth rather than error, Scripture rather than tradition, and the teachings of God's Word rather than the errors of false doctrine." (Monday's lesson) If it is that simple, why is deception so prevalent (Revelation 13:3.8)?
5. What do we mean when we say that "the Reformation continues"? (Revelation 18:1; Tuesday's lesson) What is it that the reforms did and what still needs to be done? Ultimately, how do the issues in the last days come down to authority? Whose authority do we follow: God's, our own, the beast's, or someone else's? Upon reflection, whose authority are you following? How does God use his authority (Matthew 28:18-19)?
6. How is God's glory going to fill the earth? (See Revelation 4:11; 5:12; 18:1; 19:1; 21:26; Wednesday's lesson) How does God's revelation of his character to Moses (in Exodus 33:18, 19; 34:6, 7) help us to understand not only this, but also the context of three angels' messages (6T 19)?
7. What is the meaning of the symbolism of the Lamb, and why would it appear 28 times in the book of Revelation? (Thursday's lesson) When we are introduced to the heavenly scene with seals, we realize that we need a Revealer! (5:1-4) His role demonstrates that the Revealer himself is the main subject and not only an instrument of revelation. When he appears in the middle of the throne as the Lamb that was killed with violence (5:6), he is presented as the solution to the cosmic conflict (12:7-12).
8. So how does God make things right through the Lamb that was killed with violence? What is "an eternally valid message" about God, which truth was raised from the mud of misrepresentation by this Lamb? "What matters in this situation" — the situation when the cosmic conflict comes to an end — "is the perseverance of the believers, those who hold on to the commandments of God as revealed by the faithfulness of Jesus" (14:12)
9. What is the telling difference between the two, the Lamb who was killed with violence (5:6; 13:8) and the one who was pretending to be killed with violence (13:3) while he uses violence to kill (13:15; 18:24). "And in you" — in Babylon — "was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been killed with violence on earth" (Revelation 18:24). And the whole scenario ends with a vivid description of a harvest of grain and a harvest of grapes: "And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as the bridles of the horses, for a distance of about one thousand six hundred stadia." (14:20)
10. As we end 13 weeks of study of the three angels' messages, we can realize anew that God will use whatever it takes to warn us of the eternal consequences of our

moral choices. Because he loves us, he wants to see us saved and not deceived! (see Isaiah 14:12 cf. Revelation 22:16; compare with Genesis 2:9, 16, 17) Some choices have eternal consequences. How can this reality be understood and shared in the light of the loving character of our Creator and His big picture plans for us?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

That's all! All they argued about was God and his government, and what he wanted of his children. I believe the Great Controversy will end just as it began. The good news is the truth in the Great Controversy. The truth is the truth that needed to be known in the Great Controversy, and that is the truth about God. The errors, the opposition, they are all about God. And all the details are just reflections about this basic position that we take. Are we on God's side, or not, in the Great Controversy? Are we so settled into the truth about God "both intellectually and spiritually" that we could not be moved? Could you name anybody in the Bible other than the Lord himself, who was so settled into the truth about God, both intellectually he could talk about it, and spiritually he would stake his life on it, that he could not be moved? That's Job? That's what the whole book is about. And the three theologians came and said, "God is like this." He said, "He is not. He is like this. I can't make sense out of what is happening to me, but he could slay me and I'd still trust him." I believe Job was fully sealed and settled. If we were as settled as Job was, we'd be ready to pass through the time of trouble and the Lord could come.

But, you see, so often we are trying to settle people on all the other matters. If you settle people on the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the state of the dead, tithe, and health, without settling them on the truth about God they might keep the Sabbath as Jesus' enemies did. They might pay tithe as his enemies did. They might read the Bible as his enemies did. We could be developing in this campaign to win a million Adventists, we could, forbid the thought, develop a million enemies who faithfully keep the Sabbath, practice health reform, pay tithe, and read their Bibles. Now that is a horrible thought. But if we are not clear on the picture of God we might do well not to be in such a hurry. Have you read Ellen White's comment? "The Lord is not now working to bring many into the truth, because there are so many unconverted in the church." {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)

I understand that someday we will be able to stand in the presence of God and say: “God, we would do all these things from here on, whether You ever ask us to or not—because we agree with You that they are sensible and they are right.” And God could say, “That is good. At last you’re free. Now you have learned the truth and the truth will set and keep you free.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #12, “God’s Law Is No Threat to Our Freedom” 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/12MMCAG>

Now Paul confessed with shame that formerly he had misrepresented God, even to the extent of believing Satan’s lies, so that he would use force and persecution, even stoning, to compel people to obey. But after Paul accepted the good news, he devoted the rest of his life to telling the truth. Who has written more eloquently about freedom, about love, and about trust, that all God asks of us is trust, that we are not under law, but under grace, and there is no need to be afraid of God? Paul had learned the truth about God that sets His children free.

You remember Jesus’ words in John 8:32: “You will know the truth [and with Jesus, it is always the truth about His Father. You will know the truth], and the truth will set you free” (*Williams*). You see, if God were the kind of person Satan has made Him out to be, there would be no freedom. There would only be the bondage of fear. But Paul had learned the truth and now he took it everywhere he could. He took it to the Galatians. And when he took the truth, he took freedom to them. He noticed they loved it at first. Then they turned away from it. “Oh,” he says, “stand fast in this freedom.” Look at Galatians 5:1: “This is the freedom with which Christ has made us free. So keep on standing in it, and stop letting your necks be fastened in the yoke of slavery again” (*Williams*).

Now there had been a day when Paul himself was satisfied with the obedience that resulted from law and fear. He thought it was the right thing to do. That was what the sovereign God preferred. But now Paul knows the good news. He knows the truth, and he realizes that God does not want the obedience that springs from law and fear. He wants the obedience of faith; the obedience that comes from free people who agree with God that this is the right thing to do. They agree so fully, they don’t even need to be told to do so. They do what is right because they agree it is right. {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>

What about the fire? How many times in the Bible, God's glory, the brilliance that surrounds His divine person, is described as having the appearance of fire. Look at Exodus 24:17: "Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain." (RSV) It wasn't devouring fire. It looked like it. There are many other places in Scripture where we find this glory that surrounds our God is life-giving glory. Adam and Eve could live in it. Lucifer used to, as he walked among the stones of fire. It is energizing, life-giving. It is only because we are, by our own choice, out of harmony with God that what should be life-giving is destructive. God would heal us and doesn't want to lose a one.

Someday, every one of us will come face-to-face with God. Whether we are saved or lost, at either the second coming or at the third coming. Do you think we will be afraid? Do you anticipate being afraid? What if we should be among the lost? We would look up and see Christ there in His human form. Would He be angry with us? Or will He be crying, "Why will you die? How can I give you up? How can I let you go?" Like a physician, God is there, eager and ready to heal. But He cannot force us to be well. If we do not trust Him, if we are not willing to listen, He cannot heal the damage done. What else can God do if we have come to the place where we persistently have resisted and rejected His offers and refused to listen? If we have refused to trust, we have refused to let Him help us, what else can He do but sadly give us up, as He gave up His Son, and we will die? But even then there is no need to be afraid of God Himself. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #9, "There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God" 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/9MMCAG>*

Lou: In your presentation this evening it seems clear that you are convinced that we need to be attentive to all ten of the commandments. But isn't a person, you've mentioned the word "legalist" here, isn't a person who is concerned about the law, who is even thinking about the Ten Commandments, isn't such a person a legalist? Isn't that the meaning of legalism? A person who thinks about the law? Shouldn't we be thinking about Jesus rather than about the law?

Graham: It's interesting when you think of the fact that to obey the law is to love. This suggests that the loving person is the legalist. And that doesn't seem to make sense. But I think on a broader basis one needs to consider the real meaning of legalism. Currently, my best understanding of the meaning of legalism is this: I believe that the essence of legalism is preoccupation with our legal standing with a legal, legalistic God. And so many Christians are preoccupied with their legal standing, because they don't really know God. They don't realize that He is a gracious God who is not preoccupied with our legal standing. Like the father of the prodigal son, He's very preoccupied with our welfare and whether or not we will come home. That's what

God is preoccupied with. So unfortunately, the word “legalism” is often misused, so I will repeat it. ***The essence of legalism is preoccupation with one’s legal standing with God.***

Lou: Well now, Graham let me ask you this: Could a person believe and accept, for instance, Christ’s sacrifice in his or her place in such a way—could he or she think of that in such a way that they would in effect be a legalist?

Graham: Yes, this is something to say very carefully, but I really believe that’s true. If you believe Jesus died primarily to adjust our legal standing with a God who is preoccupied with our legal standing, you are a legalist. And this means that you no longer take the blood of bulls and goats to God to adjust your legal standing—and I’d want to say this very reverently—you now take Him the blood of His son and say, “Will this adjust my legal standing?” He would say, “That’s good; now, you’ve brought Me the right blood.” This is legalism.

Lou: So you’re saying that if the purpose of our idea or our experience of salvation is meeting a legal requirement or it satisfies a legal requirement, it becomes a matter of legalism.

Graham: That’s the Devil’s sad perversion. He has actually taken the death of Christ, which is a monument to freedom and suggests that God is not preoccupied with our legal standing; he has turned that into just another ceremony to adjust legal standing. In other words, those who misunderstood the ceremonies in Old Testament times, but then became Christians, applied the same misunderstanding to the cross and to the blood of Christ. It’s just that now they have better blood and more persuasiveness with the Father to adjust their legal standing. It sounds terrible to say that.

Lou: It seems to me that you have opened the idea of the meaning and the problem of legalism to a much broader perspective, a very important perspective. You give us something to think about.

Graham: It supports the Devil’s charges that God is arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. See, all legalism is based on the conception that God has to execute those who disobey Him. Therefore, it follows that forgiveness will take care of it. That’s what produces legalism.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #12, “God’s Law Is No Threat to Our Freedom” 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/12MMCAG>

**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 #19 “How Soon Will the Conflict Be Over?” is available at:

<http://pkp.cc/19MMCAG>

### **Recommended Reading:**

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

*Conversations about God* Chapter 19—“ How Soon Will the Conflict Be Over?”

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

The message of Christ’s righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other . . . . This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel. {6T 19.1}

What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself.—*Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers* (Series A, No. 9, 1897), pages 61, 62. {TM 456.3}

[T]he message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, . . . in verity.”—*Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890. {Ev 190.3}

Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand. {GC 612.1}

The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord’s side. {GC 612.2}

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}

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 Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy beings, all waiting to do His will. Through these messengers He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men. {MH 417.2}

We cannot always readily detect the working of Satan; we do not know where he lays his traps. But Jesus understands the subtle arts of the enemy, and He can keep our feet in safe paths. . . . “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) Christ declares. {OHC 16.3}

The means by which we can overcome the wicked one is that by which Christ overcame,—the power of the word. God does not control our minds without our consent; but if we desire to know and to do His will, His promises are ours: “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” “If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.” John 8:32; 7:17, R. V. Through faith in these promises, every man may be delivered from the snares of error and the control of sin. {DA 258.5}

Let us draw nearer and nearer to the pure light of Heaven, remembering that divine illumination will increase according to our onward movements, qualifying us to meet new responsibilities and emergencies. The path of the just is progressive, from strength to strength, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory. {HP 105.5}

The Holy Spirit brings the saving truths of the Scriptures within the comprehension of all who desire to know and do the will of God. Uneducated minds are enabled to grasp the most sublime and soul-stirring themes that can engage the attention of men—themes that will be the study and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. {TMK 192.4}

All who come to Christ for a clearer knowledge of the truth will receive it. He will unfold to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and these mysteries will be understood by the heart that longs to know the truth. A heavenly light will shine into the soul temple and will be revealed to others as the bright shining of a lamp on a dark path. {TMK 205.6}

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}

God is the author of all truth; and truth practiced prepares the way for more advanced truth. When God's delegated servants proclaim fresh truth, the Holy Spirit moves upon the mind which has been prepared by walking in the light, quickening the perceptive faculties to discern the beauty and majesty of truth. {TM 378.1}

The words of truth will grow in importance, and assume a breadth and fullness of meaning of which we have never dreamed. The beauty and riches of the word have a transforming influence on mind and character. The light of heavenly love will fall upon the heart as an inspiration. {COL 132.4}

The appreciation of the Bible grows with its study. Whichever way the student may turn, he will find displayed the infinite wisdom and love of God. {COL 132.5}

The words, "A new heart also will I give you" (Ezekiel 36:26), 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 view 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 plane of intelligence. {CT 452.3}

All who come to Christ for a clearer knowledge of the truth will receive it. He will unfold to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and these mysteries will be understood by the heart that longs to know the truth. A heavenly light will shine into the soul temple, and will be revealed to others as the bright shining of a lamp on a dark path. {COL 35.3}

God is the author of truth. He enlightens the darkened understanding and gives to the human mind power to grasp and comprehend the truths which He has revealed. {SL 49.1}

The truth if received is capable of constant expansion and new developments. It will increase in brightness as we behold it, and grow in height and depth as we aspire to grasp it. Thus it will elevate us to the standard of perfection, and give us faith and trust in God as our strength for the work before us (MS 153, 1898). {5BC 1147.3}

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}

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}

Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

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 the author of truth. He enlightens the darkened understanding and gives to the human mind power to grasp and comprehend the truths which He has revealed. {SL 49.1}

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}

Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. There will be no more tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying: . . . for the former things are passed away." "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 33:24. {GC 676.1}

"I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Revelation 21:22. The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. Now we "see through a glass, darkly." 1 Corinthians 13:12. We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence and gaze upon the glory of His countenance. {SR 432.1}

There immortal minds will study with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There is no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. {SR 432.2}

And as the years of eternity roll, they will bring richer and more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed beat with a stronger devotion, and they sweep the harps of gold with a firmer hand: and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise. {SR 432.3}

There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul. {Ed 307.4}

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. We shall share the treasures gained through ages upon ages spent in contemplation of God's handiwork. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations. "Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20) will be, forever and forever, the impartation of the gifts of God. {Ed 307.5}