

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*

Lesson 3 “God’s Call to Mission”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 11:1–9; Genesis 12:1–3; Daniel 9:24–27; Matthew 1:21; Genesis 12:10–13:1; Acts 8:1–4; Acts 1:8.

Memory Text

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Moving Beyond Our Comfort Zone
- III. Becoming a Blessing to the Whole World
- IV. Abraham’s Call
- V. The Early Church and Comfort Zones
- VI. Starting From Where You Are
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Genesis 12:1-3 is often titled “The Call of Abraham”. God called Abram to leave his home and family to move to a faraway place that he did not know. This is often thought of as the first call to mission in the Bible. But a full understanding of this “call” must include the context. The immediate context of the call to Abraham is the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9. In what way is Genesis 12:1-3 the wider context of Genesis 11:1-9? Why was God so set on populating the entire earth? (Sunday’s Lesson)
2. In Genesis 12:1-3, God’s call to mission was for the purpose of putting the right person in the right place. If God called you to go somewhere without knowing where you were going, how would you respond? Why? (Monday’s Lesson)
3. Read Genesis 12:10 – 13:1. What things happened to Abram as soon as he arrived in the land God showed him? Was going to Egypt a mistake? What do you think would have happened had Abram not gone to Egypt? In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 130, it

says: “In concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, he betrayed a distrust of the divine care.” When is taking care of yourself a “distrust of the divine care”?
(Tuesday’s Lesson)

4. Read Acts 8:1-4. In the early church, what brought about the scattering of the believers beyond their comfort zone? When much of the Jerusalem church was scattered through Judea and Samaria, why did the apostles stay in the city? What does Acts 11:19 add to our understanding of this scattering? What does Galatians 2:11-12 tell us about the attitude of even Peter to the Gentile outreach?
(Wednesday’s Lesson)
5. Read Acts 10:9-15, 28-29. What message was the Lord trying to give Peter? What relevance does the same message have for our mission to the world today?
(Wednesday’s Lesson)
6. Read Acts 1:8. What principle did Jesus present for being His witnesses to the world? Which do you think is harder, to witness to your own family, neighbors and friends or to go overseas to a very different culture? (Thursday’s Lesson)
7. Two challenges for this week: 1) Identify a people group in your community that the church has not made efforts to reach. 2) Pray for an opportunity to engage people who belong to this group. (Thursday’s Lesson)
8. “There are in our world many who are nearer the kingdom of God than we suppose.” By what process can we find people who belong in this category? (Friday’s Lesson)
9. When it comes to your own life and experiences, how would you define the term “mission”? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

“At first, the people of the whole world had only one language. . . . And they said to one another . . . ‘Now let’s build a city with a tower that reaches the sky.’” (GNB)

Now these inhabitants of Babel, did they believe in God? Did they believe in His power? Did they believe He had the power to drown the whole world in a flood? Did they believe His promise that He would never do it again? And so they built the tower. They didn’t build the tower because they didn’t believe in God, but because they did believe in God and it scared them that He has so much power. So perhaps we need not spend so much time discussing God’s power, unless we don’t believe that He has it. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, “God’s Way of Restoring Trust” 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/4MMCAG>*

Now, as Christians, loyal members of the family, we all remember Christ's commission, Matthew 24:14: "This Good News about the Kingdom, [and especially the way the King runs His kingdom,] will be preached through all the world . . . and then the end will come" (GNB). Could you conceive of any higher honor or pleasure, or privilege, than to join with the loyal angels in making this good news known to all the world, this everlasting truth about our God? {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>

And now as the disciples went out to explain it the best they could, and they did learn to do it better and better as time went on. You remember Peter still had much to learn. And the brethren in Jerusalem had much to learn. They still thought they should hang on to the ceremonies, you remember. The commission was given to the early Christian church when it still had a lot of theological progress to make. You see, just because we are commissioned, it doesn't mean our theology is perfect! Because certainly the early Christian leaders did not have a perfect theology, but they had the essence of it, and they went out to give the good news. {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)

Further Study with Ellen White

This confederacy was born of rebellion against God. The dwellers on the plain of Shinar established their kingdom for self-exaltation, not for the glory of God. Had they succeeded, a mighty power would have borne sway, banishing righteousness and inaugurating a new religion. The world would have been demoralized. Erroneous theories would have diverted minds from allegiance to the divine statutes, and the law of Jehovah would have been ignored and forgotten. But God never leaves the world without witnesses for Him. At this time there were men who humbled themselves before God and cried unto Him. "O God," they pleaded, "interpose between Thy cause, and the plans and methods of men." "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded." Genesis 11:5. Angels were sent to bring to nought the purposes of the builders. {8T 213.3}

It was for the purpose of bringing the best gifts of Heaven to all the peoples of earth that God called Abraham out from his idolatrous kindred and bade him dwell in the land of Canaan. "I

will make of thee a great nation," He said, "and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." Genesis 12:2. . . . {PK 15.1}

Men had well-nigh lost the knowledge of the true God. Their minds were darkened by idolatry. For the divine statutes, which are "holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12), men were endeavoring to substitute laws in harmony with the purposes of their own cruel, selfish hearts. Yet God in His mercy did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church. He designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring the moral image of God in man. {PK 15.2}

God did not design that His people should build up a wall of partition between themselves and their fellow men. The heart of Infinite Love was reaching out toward all the inhabitants of the earth. Though they had rejected Him, He was constantly seeking to reveal Himself to them and make them partakers of His love and grace. His blessing was granted to the chosen people, that they might bless others. {PP 368.1}

In the Teacher sent from God, heaven gave to men its best and greatest. He who had stood in the councils of the Most High, who had dwelt in the innermost sanctuary of the Eternal, was the One chosen to reveal in person to humanity the knowledge of God. {Ed 73.2}

If in our ignorance we make missteps, the Saviour does not forsake us. We need never feel that we are alone. Angels are our companions. The Comforter that Christ promised to send in His name abides with us. In the way that leads to the City of God there are no difficulties which those who trust in Him may not overcome. There are no dangers which they may not escape. There is not a sorrow, not a grievance, not a human weakness, for which He has not provided a remedy. {MH 249.1}

An angel guided Philip to the one who was seeking for light and who was ready to receive the gospel, and today angels will guide the footsteps of those workers who will allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify their tongues and refine and ennoble their hearts. The angel sent to Philip could himself have done the work for the Ethiopian, but this is not God's way of working. It is His plan that men are to work for their fellow men. {AA 109.2}

He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself He presented a lesson appropriate to the time and the circumstances. Every neglect or insult shown by men to their fellow men only made Him more conscious of their need of His divine-human sympathy. He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as the children of God. {MH 25.5}

How carefully the Lord worked to overcome the prejudice against the Gentiles that had been so firmly fixed in Peter's mind by his Jewish training! By the vision of the sheet and its contents He

sought to divest the apostle's mind of this prejudice and to teach the important truth that in heaven there is no respect of persons; that Jew and Gentile are alike precious in God's sight; that through Christ the heathen may be made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the gospel. {AA 136.3}

We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls. {DA 347.3}

It is the love of God continually transferred to man that enables him to impart light. Into the hearts of all who are united to God by faith the golden oil of love flows freely, to shine out again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God. {COL 418.5}

When the grace of God reigns within, the soul will be surrounded with an atmosphere of faith and courage and Christlike love, an atmosphere invigorating to the spiritual life of all who inhale it. . . . Those who are humble in heart the Lord will use to reach souls whom the ordained ministers cannot approach. They will be moved to speak words which reveal the saving grace of Christ. {AG 238.5}

And in blessing others they will themselves be blessed. God gives us the opportunity to impart grace, that He may refill us with increased grace. Hope and faith will strengthen as the agent for God works with the talents and facilities that God has provided. He will have a divine agency to work with him. {AG 238.6}

To us also the promise of Christ's abiding presence is given. The lapse of time has wrought no change in His parting promise. He is with us today as truly as He was with the disciplines, and He will be with us "even unto the end." {8T 17.1}

All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {DA 827.3}

The Lord Jesus is our efficiency in all things; His Spirit is to be our inspiration; and as we place ourselves in His hands to be channels of light, our means of doing good will never be exhausted, for the resources of the power of Jesus Christ are to be at our command. We may draw upon His fullness and receive of that grace which has no limit. The Captain of our salvation at every step would teach us that almighty power is at the demand of living faith. He says, "Without me

ye can do nothing;" but again declares that "greater works than these shall ye do; because I go unto my Father." {HP 319.4}

It is a law of heaven that as we receive we are to impart. The Christian is to be a benefit to others; thus he himself is benefited. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 11:25). This is not merely a promise. It is a law of God's divine administration, a law by which He designs that the streams of beneficence shall be kept, like the waters of the great deep, in constant circulation, perpetually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the power of Christian missions. . . . {HP 317.5}

It is our privilege to have a calm, close, happy walk with Jesus every day we live. {TMK 320.4}