

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2024: *The Great Controversy*

Lesson 3 “Light Shines *in the Darkness*”

Read for this week’s study

John 8:44; Proverbs 23:23; Acts 20:27–32; 2 Thessalonians 2:7–12; Psalm 119:105, 116, 130, 133, 160; Proverbs 16:25; 2 Corinthians 4:3–6.

Memory Text

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going’ ” (John 12:35, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Compromise: Satan’s Subtle Strategy
- III. Savage Wolves
- IV. Safeguarded by the Word
- V. Human Reasoning Apart from Scripture
- VI. Battle for the Mind
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. This lesson is based on the book *The Great Controversy*, chapter 3. Chapter 2 describes the experience of the church in the centuries following New Testament times (roughly AD 100-313). Chapter 3 focuses on the period after Christianity became the dominant religion of the Roman Empire (AD 313-538). What impact do you think worldly favor, wealth and power had on the church? Read Revelation 12:9. What are the five titles of the adversary in the cosmic conflict? How does Satan seek to establish his authority over the universe? What implications does that have for the two eras of Christian history outlined in the lessons for last week and this week? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)

2. Read John 14:6 and 8:44. What is at the core of the contrast between the character of Jesus and the character of Satan? How is this contrast illustrated in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:17; 3:4)? What do Proverbs 23:23, John 17:17 and John 8:32 imply about the truth of God's Word? (Sunday's Lesson)
3. There were many eras of church history when the Bible was ignored, suppressed or its possession was prohibited. Where did people turn in those days in order to get a Word from the Lord? Today the Bible is freely available. What strategies does Satan use today to minimize the impact of God's Word on the human race? (Sunday's Lesson)
4. What are the four main ways that Christians determine what is truth (sometimes called the Wesleyan Quadrilateral)? Both Catholics and Protestants practice the quadrilateral, whether they realize it or not. What is the decisive difference between the two? In the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, mission advance was one of the motivations for subtle shifts in doctrine. What's the danger in meeting people where they are (a biblical principle)?
5. Read Acts 20:27-32. What warnings did Paul, under inspiration, offer regarding the future of the church? When faced with questions you can't answer, how do you learn discernment—ability to detect truth from error? What influences in today's world can result in the kinds of compromise that have happened before? (Monday's Lesson)
6. Read John 17:15-17 and Acts 20:32. What role does the Word of God play in safeguarding people against the deceptions of Satan? (Tuesday's Lesson)
7. Are there parts of the Bible that are more inspired than others? How shall we handle parts of the Bible that don't make sense to us or that seem irrelevant to everyday life today? How do we deal with the fact that the Bible is both a divine product and a human product? (Tuesday's Lesson)
8. Read Proverbs 16:25, Judges 21:25, and Isaiah 53:6. What do these texts reveal about Satan's strategy of deception? (Wednesday's Lesson)
9. Why is the human mind without the aid of the Holy Spirit incapable of discovering divine truth? On the other hand, how does reason help us understand divine revelation? (Wednesday's Lesson)
10. Read 2 Corinthians 4:3-6. How do eyes get "blinded" spiritually? How do they get opened? (Thursday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

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. {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)

Recommended Listening:

Conversations About God #5 "The Record of the Evidence" is available at:

<http://pkp.cc/5MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. {COL 173.1}

The Son of God came to the world as a restorer. He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Every word He uttered was spirit and life. He spoke with authority, conscious of His power to bless humanity, and deliver the captives bound by Satan; conscious also that by His presence He could bring to the world fullness of joy. He longed to help every oppressed and suffering member of the human family, and show that it was His prerogative to bless, not to condemn. {LHU 37.2}

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

Yet Satan was not then destroyed. The angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the great controversy. The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed. And for the sake of man, Satan's existence must be continued. Man as well as angels must see the contrast between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness. He must choose whom he will serve. {DA 761.3}

Christ came to this earth in human form that He might stand as the Captain of our salvation, so that we should not be overcome by Satan's power. And when the enemy has seemed to be gaining a signal victory over righteousness, God has been working in mercy and power to counteract his designs. {TDG 308.4}

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}

Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. {DA 258.6}

That prayer of Christ embraces all His followers to the close of time. Our Saviour foresaw the trials and dangers of His people; He is not unmindful of the dissensions and divisions that distract and weaken His church. He is looking upon us with deeper interest and more tender compassion than moves an earthly parent's heart toward a wayward, afflicted child. He bids us learn of Him. He invites our confidence. He bids us open our hearts to receive His love. He has pledged Himself to be our helper. {5T 237.2}

By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go. {MH 182.1}

If you will ask help of God you need not ask in vain. In order to encourage us to have confidence and trust He comes near us by His holy Word and Spirit, and seeks in a thousand ways to win our confidence. But in nothing does He take more delight than in receiving the weak who come to Him for strength. If we will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to find an ear to hear and an arm to save. {TDG 194.5}

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}

The truth as it is in Jesus will not degrade but elevate the receiver, purify his life, refine his taste, sanctify his judgment. {OHC 230.6}

The Lord's angels are appointed to keep strict watch over those who put their faith in the Lord, and these angels are to be our special help in every time of need. Every day we are to come to the Lord with full assurance of faith, and to look to Him for wisdom. . . . Those who are guided by the Word of the Lord will discern with certainty between falsehood and truth, between sin and righteousness (MS 43, 1907). {7BC 907.1}

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}

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}

This world is a theater. The actors, the inhabitants of the world, are preparing to act their part in the last great drama. God is lost sight of. There is no unity of purpose, except as parties of men confederate to gain their ends. God is looking on. His purposes in regard to His rebellious subjects will be fulfilled. The world has not been given into the hands of men, though God is permitting the elements of confusion and disorder to bear sway for a season. (Letter 141, 1902). {6BC 1106.2}

[T]hose who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people. {GC 517.2}

Through the Holy Spirit, God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. {COL 414.2}

If God, the divine Artist, gives to the simple flowers that perish in a day their delicate and varied colors, how much greater care will He have for those who are created in His own image? This lesson of Christ's is a rebuke to the anxious thought, the perplexity and doubt, of the faithless heart. {SC 123.2}

The Bible contains a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. It is the book that makes us wise unto salvation. It tells us of the love of God as shown in the plan of redemption, imparting the knowledge essential for all students—the knowledge of Christ. . . . {CT 422.1}

The Bible was not written for the scholar alone; on the contrary, it was designed for the common people. The great truths necessary for our salvation are made as clear as noonday, and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God. {LHU 130.6}

Divine wisdom will order the steps of those who put their trust in the Lord. Divine love will encircle them, and they will realize the presence of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. {OHC 324.6}

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. {Ed 190.2}

The word of God, like the character of its Author, presents mysteries that can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. But God has given in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine authority. His own existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. True, He has not removed the possibility of doubt; faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration; those who wish to doubt have opportunity; but those who desire to know the truth find ample ground for faith. {Ed 169.2}

The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God. {Ed 126.4}

And while Christ opens heaven to man, the life which He imparts opens the heart of man to heaven. Sin not only shuts us away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. All this work of evil it is Christ's mission to undo. The faculties of the soul, paralyzed by sin, the darkened mind, the perverted will, He has power to invigorate and to restore. He opens to us the riches of the universe, and by Him the power to discern and to appropriate these treasures is imparted. {Ed 28.3}

Jesus took the nature of humanity, in order to reveal to man a pure, unselfish love, to teach us how to love one another. {5BC 1126.1}

Christ could not have come to this earth with the glory that He had in the heavenly courts. Sinful human beings could not have borne the sight. He veiled His divinity with the garb of humanity, but He did not part with His divinity. A divine-human Saviour, He came to stand at the head of the fallen race, to share in their experience from childhood to manhood (RH June 15, 1905). {5BC 1128.2}