

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2024: *The Great Controversy*

Lesson 4 “Standing for the Truth”

Read for this week’s study

Daniel 7:23–25; Revelation 12:6, 14; Jude 3, 4; Revelation 2:10; Acts 5:28–32; Psalm 19:7–11;
1 John 5:11–13.

Memory Text

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:14, 15, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Persecuted Yet Triumphant
- III. Light Vanquishes the Darkness
- IV. Courage to Stand
- V. The Morning Star of the Reformation
- VI. Cheered by Hope
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The ancient city of Smyrna (modern-day Izmir) housed a church which suffered a great deal for the gospel. About 60 years after the book of Revelation was written, the leader of the church at Smyrna, Polycarp, was martyred for his faith. This lesson, based on *The Great Controversy*, chapters 4-6, covers the church in the Middle Ages (AD 538-1517). It explores the theme of staying faithful, in spite of threats from both inside and outside the church. **The Bible contains principles that enabled Polycarp and others to remain faithful unto death.** (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Daniel 7:23-25 and Revelation 12:6, 14. A common element in these texts is a period of time listed as “time, times, and half a time” and “1260 days”. Adventists read these texts on the basis of the Year-Day Principle, which goes something like this: “Whenever in Bible prophecy a period of time is given in days, the fulfillment will be in an equivalent number of years.” Proof for the principle is found in

- Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. How would you defend the principle on the basis of those texts? (Sunday's Lesson)
3. With the help of the Year-Day Principle early Adventists understood all lines of prophecy to terminate in the years 1798 and 1844. If all lines of prophecy ended 150-200 years ago, what value do they have for us today? (Sunday's Lesson)
 4. Read Jude 3 and 4. What is the warning here and how does it apply to the church today? What encourages you in challenging times? What frightens you? How do you deal with challenges to the church or your faith? (Monday's Lesson)
 5. Read Acts 5:28-32 and Ephesians 6:10-12. What basic principles are found in these texts? The Waldenses were distinguished by three things: absolute allegiance to God, the authority of Scripture, and the supremacy of Christ. Which of these three is the most important for maintaining faithfulness to God in today's world? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 6. What drove the Waldenses was the contrast between the church of their day and the Bible they had newly discovered. This became a threat to the dominant church. Why then is the wide distribution of the Bible today not seen as a threat by the Roman Catholic Church? Why would anyone consider the Bible to be a better safeguard for the faith than a carefully vetted and chosen church leadership? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 7. Read Proverbs 4:18. Why is truth like the sun, rising gradually in intensity rather than coming all at once? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 8. Read Psalms 19:7-11; 119:140 and 119:162. What attitude did David have toward the Bible, which was the cornerstone of the Reformation? When the psalmist says, "The law of the Lord is perfect" (Psalm 19:7), what is it perfect for? John Wycliffe (born around 1330, died 1384—sometimes called "The Morning Star of the Reformation") spent most of his life translating the Bible into the English language. He seems to have done so for two reasons: The Word had changed his life, and he wanted to share what he had found with others. (Wednesday's Lesson)
 9. How were the martyrs able to overcome their fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15; John 14:19)? Read John 11:25-26. What message does this verse share that can help us in the trials of life? (Thursday's Lesson)
 10. Here is a question for the legal experts among us, or those who don't mind a little research online. What is the difference between case law and code law? How might that apply to our understanding of the Bible? (Friday's Lesson)
 11. What is "progressive light"? Why does God reveal truth gradually? How should that fact affect the way we read the Bible? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

As we study the prophecies here, what do they say about God? Do the prophecies even leave room for delay, by the way? Well, the book of Revelation certainly does. It even speaks of it. “Hold! Do not let these events occur until my servants are sealed in their foreheads.” It’s hard not to get into Revelation when we’re reading Daniel.

It’s significant to me how Jesus commented on the purpose of prophecy. Not just Daniel, of course, but others; but there are so many in Daniel that are so specific. Look at Matthew 24. Jesus himself made some prophecies, and he commented on the purpose of them. Matthew 24:25. You remember they asked how soon he would come. “Well,” he said, “several things will occur before I come.” In fact, verse 23:

Then if anyone says to you, “Lo, here is the Christ!” or “There he is!” do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Lo, I have told you beforehand [suggesting that he had warned them in advance, so they’d be prepared].

But he gave an additional reason in John 13:19. And I think prophecies have these dual purposes, suggesting it does pay to work them out, indeed. There is warning, unless, of course, we misinterpret them and are looking for the wrong thing. So it pays to study carefully. But an additional reason is given in 13:19: “I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he.” {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)

But is it possible to be convinced and accept this truth, and be willing to give up anything to have this peace, and yet still experience some very un-peaceful struggling within ourselves? This troubles many. It troubled Paul and he confesses it in Romans 7, the whole chapter. Look particularly at Romans 7:23, 24. After he said, “All the good that I would do, I don’t do.” You remember the struggle in that whole chapter:

I see a different law at work in my body—a law that fights against the law which my mind approves of. . . it makes me a prisoner. . . . What an unhappy man I am! Who will rescue me? (GNT)

And as you know, all of chapter 8 describes the rescue. The chapter begins by Paul saying that God does not condemn His struggling children. He is not only our Father, but our Divine

Physician, and He knows that the habits of a lifetime are not cured overnight. And so, as we struggle, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all on our side to help us and to heal us. Look at the marvelous summary at the end of Romans 8, verses 31, 38 and 39:

If God is for us [the subject of the whole chapter, in fact the first eight chapters of Romans], who can be against us? . . . I am certain that . . . neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers . . . will ever be able to separate us from the love of God.
(GNT)

In fact, if we need discipline to overcome bad habits and learn new ones, God will give it to us. But when the discipline comes, we will understand. He's not angry with us. He is disciplining us because He loves us. We will not allow the discipline to disturb our peace with God. Look at Hebrews 12:11. Just a line out of that whole section on God disciplines whom He loves as a father disciplines his son: "Now, no discipline seems pleasant at the time. . . . Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace. . . ." In fact, if we've been set right with our God and we've been won back to love and trust, God can even turn our trials and troubles to our advantage. Going back to Romans 5, look at verses 3 and 4, next on our list: "We can be full of joy here and now even in our trials and troubles. These very things will give us patient endurance; this in turn will develop a mature character." (*Phillips*). And you know how that passage goes on. And a mature character produces a hope that will never let us down. And that makes for great peace between us and our God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #20, "At Peace with our Heavenly Father" 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/20MMCAG>*

Almost two thousand years have passed since God won His case on Calvary. Satan's lies and accusations have long ago been met. The freedom of the universe has been eternally secured. Why, then, does God still tolerate this one rebellious spot in His loyal universe? He longs to recreate our world and give it to His trusting saints. Why does He still wait?

When Jesus returns, He will come to a generation of believers who have experienced Satan's last supreme attempt to deceive and destroy God's loyal children on this planet. They will have accomplished what one-third of the angels failed to do. They will have refused to be turned against God by Satan's lies. They will have been able to say with Paul, "If anyone, even an angel from heaven, should bring a different version of the everlasting Good News, he is wrong, and we will not believe it!" (Galatians 1) These are not babes in the truth. They are grown-up believers. They meet the biblical description of Christian perfection and maturity: they have "Their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil." (Hebrews 5:14) They have not

only the teachable faith of a little child, which still needs much protection, but—like Job—they can stand alone. Though their faith be severely tested, they will never let God down.

God is waiting for such firm believers. The last book in the Bible pictures the angels as mercifully holding back the final winds of strife until the minds of God’s children have been unshakably sealed and settled into the truth.

But what is this truth? Remember the pious beliefs of those who nailed Jesus to the cross—then hurried home to keep the Sabbath holy! Do we accept Jesus’ testimony about His Father? Are we convinced that God is just as gracious as the Son? Or are we still “easily swayed by every wind of doctrine”? (Ephesians 4) Do we still need emergency measures to be reverent and do what is right? Are we the reason why God still waits? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #18, “God Waits For His Children To Grow Up”, Bible Reference Sheet, 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/18MMCAG>*

Now, they were known as the experts in the scriptures, were they not? These were the theologians—the Pharisees—which gave them great influence. In fact, they derived their authority from the general recognition that if you want to know what the Bible teaches, you go to the Pharisees. And Jesus came along and said, “You have misread the Bible.” And that’s extremely offensive. You tell a theologian, “You know, you’re really wrong.” That surely was involved, and their pride. Supposing the Lord were to come into a group of Adventists and say, “By the way, I know you’ve been using such and such a verse all along. You know, it’s really wrong.” Could we accept that with grace? Of course, we don’t expect him to correct us on anything, do we? We know we’re right on everything, don’t we? So, what could I pick that would do?

Well, supposing Jesus came to a group of Seventh-day Adventists, and said, “By the way, you have not been keeping the Sabbath correctly. You have been too strict.” How would we react? You know, we’d say, “Well, we’ve been warned that false prophets would come. ‘To the Law and to the Testimony’ and you’re not speaking in harmony.” I think we shouldn’t underestimate the devotion, the dedication of these Pharisees. And they were highly respected by the people.

And he said, “I read the Old Testament differently.” You remember, in the Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the poor,” and they said, “That’s ridiculous! The poor aren’t blessed. They’re poor because they’re **not** blessed. If they were blessed, they would be rich.” And then he says, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” If you’re rich, you’re blessed. Otherwise you wouldn’t be rich. And you wouldn’t be blessed if you weren’t good, so if you were rich, you were good. So Jesus was

saying to those Bible students, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a good person to be saved.” That’s ridiculous! It’s just their basic understanding was wrong. And Jesus said, “I say, blessed are you poor, because you’re more willing to accept what I have to offer than these rich people. Because the rich people know they’re okay.” You see, they had key texts for this. They’d go back to Deuteronomy. “If you obey me, I’ll bless you and prosper you. If you disobey me, I’ll curse you and there’ll be punishments, and plague, and all the rest. And your crops will not flourish.” The three friends of Job argued with him over that very point. And they were wrong. So Jesus was taking the same point of view against the Pharisees as Job was taking against the three theologians who came to him. Don’t oversimplify on this. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Mark, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/53MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/54MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin. {COL 77.1}

If we were left to ourselves to plan, we should make mistakes. Our prejudices, our weaknesses, our self-deceptions, and our ignorances would be manifest in many ways. But the work is the Lord’s, the cause is His; He never leaves His workmen without divine directions. . . . {ML 10.5}

You must learn the simple art of taking God at His word; then you have solid ground beneath your feet. {ML 10.8}

The Lord is our helper, our defense. God has provided that no soul that trusts in Him shall be overcome by the enemy. {CTr 47.4}

We know that in sadness and grief we feel very frail, but we know that Jesus is right by our side to sympathize with us, and He will help us. We can commune with our best Friend; He is right by our side. We need not go into the heavens to bring Him down, for He is right by us to help us. {CTr 42.4}

In the closing scenes of this earth’s history, when intensity is taking possession of every earthly element, the Lord requires of us a vigilance that knows no relaxation. But we are not left to struggle alone. Amid the dangers increasing on every hand, those who walk humbly before

God, distrustful of their own wisdom, will have angels as their helpers and protectors. In times of special peril they will know the power of God's keeping care.—RH April 25, 1907. {TA 272.3}

Christ is the source of every right impulse. He is the only one that can implant in the heart enmity against sin. Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own sinfulness, is an evidence that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts. {SC 26.3}

God has a deep and earnest love for every member of the human family; not one is forgotten, not one is left helpless and deceived to be overcome by the enemy. {FE 299.2}

Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan. {GC 510.3}

He finds His faithful ones, and holds communion with them, encouraging and strengthening them. And angels of God, that excel in strength, are sent forth by God to minister to His human workers who are speaking the truth to those who know it not. {8T 17.3}

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}

By imparting to others the love and tenderness which God has so abundantly bestowed on us, we are to let our light shine. {RC 198.5}

As God called Daniel to witness for Him in Babylon, so He calls us to be His witnesses in the world today. In the smallest as well as the largest affairs of life He desires us to reveal to men the principles of His kingdom. {COL 357.1}

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}

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}

That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, “This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan.” There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus. It is DO, and Live (Letter 89, 1898). {1BC 1105.2}

God’s law is the law of love. He has surrounded you with beauty to teach you that you are not placed on earth merely to delve for self, to dig and build, to toil and spin, but to make life bright and joyous and beautiful with the love of Christ—like the flowers, to gladden other lives by the ministry of love. {MB 97.3}

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}

The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. . . The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God. {5BC 1132.8}

In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God. {COL 38.1}

There, there is no disappointment, no sorrow, no sin, no one who shall say, “I am sick.” There, there is no burial train, no mourning, no death, no parting, no broken hearts; and Jesus is there, peace is there.... In His presence is fullness of joy, at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore! {ML 349.4}

The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. {Mar 302.2}

To the believer, death is but a small matter. Christ speaks of it as if it were of little moment. “If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death,” “he shall never taste of death.” John 8:51, 52. To the Christian, death is but a sleep, a moment of silence and darkness. The life is hid with

Christ in God, and “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Colossians 3:4. {FLB 187.3}

Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day (MS 28, 1886). {7BC 974.3}

The promise is not that we will have strength today for a future emergency, that anticipated future trouble will be provided for beforehand, before it comes to us. We may, if we walk by faith, expect strength and provision for us as fast as our circumstances demand it. We live by faith, not by sight. The Lord’s arrangement is for us to ask Him for the very things that we need. The grace of tomorrow will not be given today. Men’s necessity is God’s opportunity. . . . {OHC 125.2}

God’s everlasting arm encircles the soul that turns to Him for aid, however feeble that soul may be. {4T 328.1}

God has the world in His hand. We have God on our side. All heaven is waiting and longing for our cooperation. The Lord is supreme. Why then should we fear? The Lord is almighty; why should we tremble? In the past God has delivered His people, and He will be our helper if we will arise in His strength and go forward. {TMK 342.3}