

# Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

## Second Quarter 2024: *The Great Controversy*

### Lesson 10 “Spiritualism Exposed”

#### Read for this week’s study

Matthew 10:28; Ecclesiastes 9:5; Isaiah 8:19, 20; John 11:11–14, 21–25; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Revelation 16:13, 14; Matthew 24:23–27; 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12.

#### Memory Text

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. The Deadly Consequences of Spiritualism
- III. Death in the Old Testament
- IV. Death in the New Testament
- V. Spiritualism in the Last Days: Part 1
- VI. Spiritualism in the Last Days: Part 2
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The aim of this lesson is to show that our only safeguard against Satan’s last-day delusions is a personal relationship with Christ and a solid grounding in the teachings of the Bible. This includes its teaching about death, regardless of what our eyes and ears and hearts might try to tell us.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson discusses the deadly consequences of spiritualism – belief that the alleged spirits of the dead can communicate with the living in order to convey some unavailable knowledge, often about future events. What makes these practices so dangerous? Why do people seem to have an insatiable desire for “insider’s knowledge”? How do we test the knowledge we get from various sources? How do we decide which sources and interpretations can be trusted?

3. Monday's lesson focuses on the OT understanding of death. What does it mean when the Bible compares death to sleep? Where does the analogy break down?
4. Tuesday's lesson addresses the NT understanding of death. What is the new development in the storyline? "The New Testament adds an additional dimension, one already hinted at in the Old: the glorious resurrection at Christ's return." Why is resurrection such an important part of our faith?
5. Wednesday's and Thursday's lesson focus on the role of spiritualism in the last days (which according to the NT started with the Pentecost!). What kinds of deceptions will people face in the last days (Matthew 24:5, 11, 24; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-9; Revelation 13:13, 14; 16:13, 14)? In what ways do "signs and wonders" appeal to the affective side of human beings rather than to their discretionary and rational abilities? Why is this dangerous (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)?
6. How would you share your faith with a friend who just lost a loved one and believes that the person is in heaven? What is appropriate to say, and what is not appropriate? How would you share your empathy in a pastorally sensitive yet meaningful way?
7. How would you express the Biblical worldview about human nature in positive terms? How does that help address the escapism that we often see in Christianity? How does an accurate Biblical worldview protect people from hedonism and the worship of the body?
8. Elements of spiritualist beliefs have been absorbed into broader New Age and modern spiritual practices. Many people who don't identify as "spiritualists" still believe in or are curious about mediums, past-life regressions, and communications with the spirit realm. What do you find most helpful in sharing the biblical picture of the wholistic understanding of human nature?
9. What other threats do you see in our world: 1) for the survival of humanity; 2) to balanced spirituality? Which of them have become prominent in the last 30-50 years?
10. Many surveys, especially in the West, show an increase in individuals who identify as "spiritual but not religious" (SBNR). These individuals may not adhere to traditional religious beliefs or practices but still have a sense of a higher power, purpose, or interconnectedness. How can we reach this group of people with an attractive picture of God's character?

## Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

“ ‘Today . . . with Me in Paradise’ ” You could see how honest translators recognize the different choices, there’s no prejudice in this. It’s just there is no punctuation in the original and the Greek can be taken several ways.

You know the inclination if a favorite key text seems to be changed, you wonder about the committee or the individual, sometimes pictures are painted of infidel scholars in dark attics manipulating the scriptures to their own advantage. The greatest security against that is the existence of the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. See, no scholar would dare twist the Bible unscrupulously. His scholarly neck would be quickly severed in the scholarly journals forthwith. So the greatest protection against the twisting of the scriptures is the existence of the original. So when you find variations in these main line versions, it’s because there really are choices, and there isn’t malicious manipulation or prejudice. It’s just an invitation to consider the choices and it’s very useful.

Anyway, you can see the opportunities here. And we’re used to moving the punctuation around, aren’t we? Remember in Luke 23:43: “Verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in paradise.” And we Adventists have never hesitated to move that comma a little way, “Verily I say unto thee today” at this critical moment when all seems lost, comma, “you will be with me in paradise.”

We recognize that in the original Greek there was no punctuation, there wasn’t even any separation between the words, just solid capital letters one after the other, and it’s difficult to divide. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 9, recorded December 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/17MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/18MMROMANS66> (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>*

Now, what about the Fox Sisters and spiritism? See, these were the rivals to Seventh-day Adventism, weren’t they? The devil who counterfeited the first coming of Christ in the mystery religions, and the similarity is incredible. If you’ve not read about them, they had dying, rising saviors, and lord’s suppers with bread and wine, and they were washed in the blood, baptized in the blood, ate the flesh and drank the blood of their god that his nature might be within them. They were filled with the spirit, had the fruits of the spirit, though they got the spirit out of a goat skin. They were precious near and dear to those saviors, often by the services of the cult prostitutes and so on. I mean the devil really worked hard to counterfeit the first coming.

We know how he will counterfeit the Second Coming and it will be very winsome. I think we’re seeing a lot of it in the religious revivals of this time—just setting the world up to receive him.

Well in 1844 he knew what was due. He’s a diligent student of scripture, and so he came up with many options, didn’t he? The spiritism teachings have had great attraction for people. After the wars of England many people in England turned to spiritism to communicate with the dead.

Alright, what has spiritism done with the Bible? I’ll show you. Have you ever seen the *New Testament Revised by the Spirits*? This is the most incredible version that I have—1861—*The New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as Revised and Corrected by the Spirits*. Now it says absolutely that Jesus and the apostles came back to correct the errors in the Bible, you see. And then it says: “Dear reader, do trust in God. This is absolutely dependable. Just have faith.” That’s why it isn’t safe to have faith without evidence just because somebody says so. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Understanding SDA Doctrine*, #1 & 2, recorded April 1986, Glendora, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links: <http://pkp.cc/1MMUSDAD> <http://pkp.cc/2MMUSDAD>*

## Further Study with Ellen White

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}

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 intelligences, all waiting to do His will. Through channels which we cannot discern He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. But it is in this speck of a world, in the souls that He gave His only-begotten Son to save, that His interest and the interest of all heaven is centered. God is bending from His throne to hear the cry of the oppressed. To every sincere prayer He answers, "Here am I." He uplifts the distressed and downtrodden. In all our afflictions He is afflicted. In every temptation and every trial the angel of His presence is near to deliver. {DA 356.3}

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}

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." 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." John 8:51, 52; Colossians 3:4. {DA 787.1}

It is beyond the power of the human mind to estimate the evil which has been wrought by the heresy of eternal torment. The religion of the Bible, full of love and goodness, and abounding in compassion, is darkened by superstition and clothed with terror. When we consider in what false colors Satan has painted the character of God, can we wonder that our merciful Creator is feared, dreaded, and even hated? The appalling views of God which have spread over the world from the teachings of the pulpit have made thousands, yes, millions, of skeptics and infidels. {GC 536.2}

After the fall, Satan bade his angels make special effort to foster the belief in man's natural immortality; and when they had induced the people to receive this error, they led them to conclude that the sinner would live in eternal misery.—4SP 354. {TA 62.5}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to

doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error. Without sincerity there is no true religion, but sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach. The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action.—Letter 12, 1890. {2SM 56.1}

I am afraid of anything that would have a tendency to turn the mind away from the solid evidences of the truth as revealed in God's Word. I am afraid of it; I am afraid of it. We must bring our minds within the bounds of reason, lest the enemy so come in as to set everything in a disorderly way. {2SM 43.2}

The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true, that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested. {4SP 411.1}

Impressions alone are not a safe guide to duty. The enemy often persuades men to believe that it is God who is guiding them, when in reality they are following only human impulse. {AA 279.2}

As we near the time when principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places will be fully brought into the warfare against the truth, when Satan's deceptive power will be so great that, if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect, our discernment must be sharpened by divine enlightenment, that we may not be ignorant of Satan's devices. . . . {Mar 110.3}

Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. {EW 15.2}