

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 9 “Jerusalem Controversies”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 11; 1 Kings 1:32–48; Zechariah 9:9, 10; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11; Mark 12:1–34.

Memory Text

“ ‘And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses’ ” (Mark 11:25, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Triumphal Entry
- III. A Cursed Tree and a Cleansed Temple
- IV. Who Said You Could Do That?
- V. Earthly Duties and Heavenly Outcomes
- VI. The Greatest Commandment
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In this week’s lesson, when Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, He has a series of six controversies with the religious leaders (while five controversies were recorded in Mark 2 and 3 [see lesson 3]).” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. In this concluding section of Mark (11:1-16:8a), we will see the final responses of the story’s major characters, along with Jesus’ final speech to his disciples and a description of his death and its purpose. Like the cured blind man (10:52), but unlike the blind disciples, Mark’s audience needs the eyes to see and follow the radical way of God’s faithful and compassionate kingdom. We will see the final responses to the authoritative power of Jesus by the religious leaders, crowds, and the disciples themselves.
3. What role does the story of Jesus’ triumphal entry to Jerusalem play in Mark’s gospel (Mark 11:1-11; cf. Zechariah 9:9,10)? (Sunday’s lesson) Why do the crowds eagerly welcome Jesus into Jerusalem? What do the following events show about

- this crowd (1:22; 1:27; 1:32,33; 11:18; 15:10, 12:37; 14:43; 15:11-14)? Why does the crowd's initial euphoria turn to rejection (4:5-6, 16-17)?
4. What is the significance of the cursed tree and cleansing of the temple events (11:12-26)? How does the Markan 'Sandwich story' function here (see lesson 3)? (Monday's lesson) Jesus curses the tree but cleanses the temple, two opposite actions. But the irony is that the religious leaders will now react by plotting to kill Jesus. That action will spell the end of the temple services and the nation as God's representatives.
 5. Tuesday's lesson looks at the challenge that the religious leaders bring to Jesus (11:27-33) and his subsequent parable in which the leaders are thinly disguised murderers against a beneficent authority (12:1-11). How does this expose the responses to the values that Jesus represents, and God wants them to reflect?
 6. What is going on in Mark 12:13-27, and what truths does Jesus teach? (Wednesday's lesson) How does Jesus show that his movement represents a revolution much deeper and wider than their attacks on pagan dominion? What are the different levels of meaning in Jesus' saying: "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (12:17)?
 7. What deep question did the friendly scribe ask, and what double response did Jesus give (12:28-34)? How does this help us understand the type of religion that is not an empty and showy ritual, but the true essence of God's kingdom and rulership? How solid is our wholehearted love for God and the community?
 8. According to the New Testament, the followers of Jesus, equipped with the Holy Spirit are given authority, under his direction to act in his name in the world. Where can you see the "traffic jams" in our world waiting for people to step in and resolve the problem? Where can you see the "temples" that need to be challenged and warned? Where are the people who will know how to give a wise answer to the question: "Who do you think you are?" How can the community of believers play a prophetic role to the wider world?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And didn't Jesus usually talk softly? Remember how He sat on the Mount of Olives, and He even cried. Who's going to stay around and listen to a preacher who's crying? But when you realize *why* He was; "Oh", He said, "I've wanted to come close to you for so long, and you would not listen. Like a mother hen gathering its chicks, I've wanted to gather you and help you and heal you and tell you. Yes, I raised My voice on Sinai, but not to make you afraid; but to get you to listen and listen long enough so I could tell you that I don't want to make you afraid. And hardly anybody has believed that through all the years" Jesus could have gone on, "so now I've come in person, and are any of you scared of Me?" Were they scared of Jesus? Only once did they

run. When He cleansed the sanctuary, they ran. But the guilty adults ran. When they came back, they found Him healing the sick and talking to the children. They weren't scared. That was no ordinary anger there. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – 1&2 Kings, recorded November 1981, 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 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/17MMPOGIA66> (1 Kings-Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/18MMPOGIA66> (1 Kings-Part 2)

<http://pkp.cc/19MMPOGIA66> (2 Kings-Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/20MMPOGIA66> (2 Kings-Part 2)

Or to read the descriptions of how the children related to Christ—they weren't afraid of Him. In fact, the disciples thought they should be more afraid of Him. But they would climb up in His lap and Ellen White says they used to look up into His face, and she mentions that they loved to kiss that pensive face. They weren't afraid of Him. That says a lot about the kind of person our God is.

Even after the cleansing of the sanctuary—and that's one time most folk rather suppose that Christ got thoroughly angry. It's significant, though, that after He had cleansed the sanctuary not everybody ran away. Who didn't run? The children didn't run. Sick didn't run. When I was a small boy and a big man got angry, I led the way out. But when Jesus said, "Take these things hence. Don't turn my Father's house into an emporium" is the Greek word. The adults ran, but the children saw nothing to be afraid of. It was nothing like our anger.

Won't this be more like the look on the face of Christ when He comes the second time and some of us look at Him and say, "We're not afraid. Lo, this is our God, we've waited for Him." Other people look at the very same face and rush to the mountains and the caves. Is Christ two-faced, and the wicked see one side and the righteous see the other side? It's the same face. The difference is in us. The guilty adults ran as divinity flashed through humanity. But the children weren't scared. And when the adults came back sheepishly embarrassed that they had all run away from one man, they found Jesus sitting in the temple surrounded by the children healing the sick. So don't cite that as an illustration of one time at least He got thoroughly angry—not like our anger. Oh, they were impressed with the seriousness of what He said. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, PUC Teacher's Conference, #5 "Jesus the Perfect Person", recorded April 1974, Angwin, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/5MMPUCTEACH>

A lawyer came to Jesus one time and said, “What would it mean to really keep the law? Sum it up for us.” And Jesus said, “If you love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself, you have kept the essential principles of God’s law.” And later Paul said in Romans 13:8 and 10: “He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled all law, wherefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” To really obey God’s commandments as He wants them obeyed is to love. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, PUC Teacher’s Conference, #4 “You Are to Be Perfect”, recorded April 1974, Angwin, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMPUCTEACH>*

Ah, that’s another thing we think Jesus made up. You remember when the lawyer came and asked Jesus to sum up the Decalogue, He said, “To love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself.” And later He adds, “And you shall not hate your neighbor in your heart.” That’s all here in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Jesus learned from the Old Testament. Apparently the picture of God in the Old Testament was not obscure to Jesus or to others. It was to most, unfortunately. It’s just that Jesus didn’t misunderstand. He read the Bible for its original purpose. He told the Jews that many of them, unfortunately, read the Bible as a code book of deeds to be done and sins to be shunned, instead of a revelation of the truth about Him. He said, “The scriptures testify of Me, but you will not come to Me that you may have life.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Numbers, recorded October 1981, 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 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/7MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/8MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. {6T 63.3}

We are not to think of God only as a judge and to forget Him as a loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this, for our whole spiritual life is molded from our conceptions of God’s character. We have lessons to learn of Jesus’ love. {OHC 176.5}

When the mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite, the effect on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. In such communion is found the highest education. It is God's own method of development. "Acquaint now thyself with Him" (Job 22:21), is His message to mankind. {AA 126.1}

Through the Jewish nation it was God's purpose to impart rich blessings to all peoples. Through Israel the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His light to the whole world. The nations of the world, through following corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. Yet in His mercy God 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. {COL 286.1}

God desired to bring all peoples under His merciful rule. He desired that the earth should be filled with joy and peace. He created man for happiness, and He longs to fill human hearts with the peace of heaven. He desires that the families below shall be a symbol of the great family above. {COL 290.2}

Satan seeks to counterwork the work of God, and he is constantly urging men to accept his principles. He represents the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power is employed against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the results of obedience to right principles. {COL 296.4}

The Lord loves us, and we are to love Him with the whole heart. Ask Him to guide you into all truth. He will do this. He longs to do it. He is waiting for you to ask Him with true humility and a firm belief that He will hear and answer you. {TMK 202.5}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {Ed 16.1}

Like the first is the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. . . . {RC 51.3}

After Adam's sin and fall nothing was taken from the law of God. The principles of the ten commandments existed before the fall, and were of a character suited to the condition of a

holy order of beings. After the fall, the principles of those precepts were not changed, but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state (3SG 295). {1BC 1104.3}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}