

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2024: *Themes in the Gospel of John*

Lesson 10 “The Way, the Truth, and the Life”

Read for this week’s study

John 13:1–20; John 14:1–3; Daniel 7:27; John 14:5–11; John 1:14; Colossians 1:16, 17; John 5:38–40.

Memory Text

“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (John 1:18, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. I Have Given You an Example
- III. I Will Certainly Come Again
- IV. I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life
- V. I AM the Truth
- VI. The Scriptures and The Truth
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week’s lesson will begin with the purpose of the farewell discourse and its introduction with the significant episode of Jesus’ washing His disciples’ feet. Then it will turn to the ‘I AM’ statement in chapter 14 (I am the way, the truth, and the life’).” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. “Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father” (John 13:1). How is this “hour” connecting the previous parts of the gospel (cf. 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23.27; 17:1)? Why would John organize the entire half of Jesus’ story around it? Chapter 12 transitions between the work of miracles (signs) which is finished (chapters 2-11) and the Book of the Hour (chapters 13-19). This can be divided into Jesus’ preparation of his disciples for the coming hour (chs. 13-16) and Jesus’ own preparation for the hour (ch. 17).
3. What happened in John 13:1–20, and why is this story so important? (Sunday’s lesson) What shows us that this act is more than just an example (ordinance) of humility (13:8)? “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” To have a “share”

is to be part of or have a portion of a whole. The “whole” [“lot”] is the union of Son and Father. Just as Jesus abides in his Father, the disciples are to have a share with Jesus himself.

4. How is this preparing his disciples for the intimate life in the divine family (14:1-3)? “Where I am going... you will follow afterward” (13:21-14:31). (Monday’s lesson) How does the context of this statement make the second coming more meaningful than making it an isolated doctrine? Why did medieval Christianity lose sight of this doctrine? Why and how it is significant today?
5. John 14:6-7 offers a beautiful summary of the Gospel’s message: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” (Tuesday’s lesson) Why is this significant? How does it connect the main themes of the Prologue (1:1-18) and what will follow (17:3)? If you want to know how to get to the Father’s house (cf. 2:16), you must come with me. “I am the way, I am the truth.”
6. In the last two centuries, this saying of Jesus has become one of the most controversial. In our day and age of political correctness this exclusiveness sounds rather narrow. How does an understanding of the original context help us see that it is simple, yet broad enough for everyone to take advantage of this revelation?
7. How does John tie the concept of Truth directly to Jesus (1:14, 17; 8:32; 14:6; 15:26)? (Wednesday’s lesson) Knowing the untold damage that certain interpretations of this statement have done in the world, how can we preserve the meaning that Jesus gave to these words? The Creator God, God of Israel has acted decisively within history to bring the story of humanity to its intended goal and thus rescue the whole world.
8. In the 18th century, protest against the oppression that Christianity brought expressed itself in the idea that all religions bear some kind of oblique witness to general truth. Thus Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Budha and Krishna all point in the same direction, but none brings anything exclusive and binding for all humanity.
9. Thursday’s lesson connects Jesus as the Truth and the Scriptures (John 5:38-40; cf. Luke 24:27). How do we best preserve the concept that Jesus is not simply the embodiment of the truth, but He is the Truth? Truth is not a concept or a construct. It is more than a book. It is a Person! How can it be seen as liberating?
10. Any arrogance in presenting the gospel is the denial of the very truth it is claiming to present. If we give up any fixed ideas (whether ancient, medieval, secular, or whichever!) of who God is, then build our understanding of God by looking at Jesus, we will see in the person of Jesus who the true God is. He washed his disciples’ feet; He was giving up his life as the shepherd for his sheep. He prepared his disciples for what was ahead so that they could survive. Whatever questions about God arise in the minds of people today, we can help them see in the revelation of Jesus who the

true God is. How can we be clearer in presenting this beautiful and balanced picture?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And then, picture Jesus in the upper room the night before He was crucified. The record says that the twelve disciples were squabbling as to which one of them was the greatest. If you look in Luke's account, he has it in this order. Jesus said to the twelve, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover supper with you. But the one who is to betray Me is sitting with Me at the table." They began to argue as to which one of them would do this terrible thing. But they also were arguing as to which one of them should be thought of as the most important. Can you imagine their arguing about such a subject mixed in with which one of them is going to betray Him?

How did the Son of God treat them? Did He chide them for their childish behavior? Or scold them for their unwillingness to wash each other's feet? Instead, the whole universe watched as their Creator, the One they worshiped, arose, got a basin and a towel, and the Supreme Creator got down on His knees and washed a dozen pairs of dirty feet. He even washed the feet of His betrayer, Judas. Think what it says about God that He would treat them in this way. Jesus could have looked up at them and said, "You don't believe My Father would be willing to do this, do you?"

This is why during communion, I never like to do anything else but to think, and talk but very little. What moved the disciples was not that they washed each other's feet. What moved them was that **God** washed their feet. And you imagine their experience as they looked down on His head bent over the basin and felt His strong carpenter hands on their feet. Then have Him look up and say, "You don't think My Father would do this, do you? But He would. If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father. If you are comfortable with Me, you will be just as comfortable with My Father." This is what He was trying to say to them in the upper room. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #13, "How God Treats His Erring Children" recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/13MMCAG>*

Do you think the end will come, the conflict will be over, Christ will return in our own lifetime? The disciples wondered about this, you remember, and they asked Jesus, as in the first of the texts on our Bible Reference Sheet, Matthew 24:3: "Tell us [they said], when will this be and how can we tell when You're coming back and the world will come to an end?" (*Beck*) And Jesus replied that even the angels do not know. In fact, He added, that while He was still in His humble, human form on this planet, that even He did not know Himself, only the Father. Look

again at Matthew 24:36, next on the sheet. Jesus' own words: "But about that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, not even the Son; only the Father." (NEB)

But Jesus went on to indicate that there was something much more important than knowing the exact time. He indicated that it was far more important to trust Him enough to be willing to wait. You recall our conversation, "All God Asks of Us Is Trust"? For if only we trust Him enough to be ready for His coming, whenever that should be, we really don't need to know the exact time. If we trust Him, all will be well. Jesus indicated this in the next verse, in John 14:1, 3:

Set your troubled hearts at rest [on the subject, He said]. Trust in God always; trust also in me. . . . I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. (NEB)

But He did give them some details by which they could tell the approximate time. As they sat together one day on the Mount of Olives, Jesus spoke of many signs by which the disciples could tell when the End was getting near. Very familiar passages to all those who believe in the advent; He spoke of alarming disturbances in earth and sky. He spoke of growing distrust between the nations. He spoke of the rise of false religious leaders; a subject we have discussed before. He particularly warned of those who would arise and teach that His second coming was to be in secret. "Don't believe that," Jesus said. {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>*

Lou: Now that ties into another question that has come up. If God is going to run the universe the way He wants to run it, consistent with His character, why should a God of power, sovereign of the universe, why should He allow a conflict such as we are reading about here in Revelation the twelfth chapter; this picture of war in Heaven. Why should He allow that even to develop, to happen?

Graham: That fits very well with the last point, doesn't it? See, if He has that much authority and power, how could a war even take place? And this is why those who stress the sovereignty of God (and surely it is right that we should stress that) have great difficulty allowing for a war. And that's why many of the Reformers really couldn't use that sixty-sixth book. Luther says, "It was fancied that there was a war." Just couldn't wrap his mind around the idea. But to me it's one of the most wonderful things about God, that though He had the infinite power necessary to nip that war in the bud, to stop it before it ever started, He did not do so. There must be something of more value than our subservience and our submission to His power, because He allowed that thing to grow and to grow. Now, by our assessment of good administration, God was weak. It was bad management. I mean, how long would we tolerate a leader—how long

would the pastor last in our church—if there was such chaos in the membership? The committee would meet!

Lou: The person would move on, wouldn't he!

Graham: Yes. Are we going to move our God on, and suggest it was weakness on His part? We know He has infinite power. But in His infinite power, He allowed this war to develop. He allowed the questions to arise. Now that says that there is something of even greater importance than even our mere submission to His infinite power.

Lou: There is a question that ties in with the matter of the war. You have this one who seems to start the war—Day Star, Lucifer. “If God knew that there would be all this trouble, and that Lucifer would be at the center of it, why did He create Lucifer?” It's sort of similar to the first question but goes back behind it a bit.

Graham: I think very much related to it. And of course, it raises the question as to whether God **does** know everything in the future. And there are good saints who wonder about that. I would rather find an explanation that would allow me to say God can see the end from the beginning. The past, the present, and the future; they're all alike to Him. And yet I'm still free. My understanding would be that when God created Lucifer, He knew what Lucifer would do. And yet He went ahead anyway. He knew what it would cost Him. He knew what it would cost His children. And yet He went ahead. And when you think of the history of the anguish that has been involved in solving this problem and settling this war, there must be something of infinite value at stake, or God would not have done this.

Because He had other options you know, some rather easy ones. When Lucifer began to entertain these rebellious thoughts, He could have eliminated him right there and then. What damage would that have done? Well, we might say the angels looking on would think, “I'd better not have bad thoughts or I might get eliminated, too.” But after eliminating Lucifer, God could then have blotted out all memory of the elimination and no one would know. And He could do that an infinite number of times and no one would know but our God.

Now why didn't He do it? Is it He couldn't live with the fact He was doing that? Or is it that He wants us to know what He **did** do? What He did not do was take a shortcut. He allowed Lucifer to develop these thoughts, and to spread them among the angels, knowing what it would cost Him and cost His friends on this planet. We've all participated a little, it's an honor to do so, in the larger view. But knowing the thousands of years it would take, and all the misunderstanding and the anguish, God said, “I will go ahead this way.” And the angels understand this and tell Him, “You did this magnificently. And we're with You for the rest of eternity.” So what was at stake? That's the big thing.

Lou: This perspective that you're sharing with us this evening (and will develop through our twenty weeks here), this perspective includes a war, a crisis of distrust, and whether God can be trusted!

Graham: See, it's not over power, that's the big thing. If it were over God's power, who has more power?

Lou: It would be easy.

Graham: He could do that in a second. And when you stop to think of it, why preach about God's power, since even the Devil is already convinced? You remember James says that when the Devil thinks about the power of the One who hung the whole vast universe in space, it scares him. He shudders with fear. So I don't think we should spend too much time arguing about God's power. **Of course** He's infinite in majesty and power.

Lou: But you've said that the issue has to do with trust, and who's telling the truth.

Graham: That's right. The conflict is not over **who has the power**, but over **who's telling the truth**. God has been accused of the abuse of power. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1 with Lou Venden, "The Conflict in God's Family" recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

Christ knew the heart of Judas, yet He washed his feet. Infinite love could do no more to bring Judas to repentance, and save him from taking this fatal step. If this service of his Master, in humbling Himself to wash the feet of the worst sinner, did not break his heart, what more could be done? It was the last act of love that Jesus could evidence in behalf of Judas. Infinite love could not compel Judas to repent, confess his sin, and be saved. Every opportunity was granted him. Nothing was left undone that could be done to save him from the snare of Satan (RH June 14, 1898). {5BC 1138.7}

Christ looked upon them sadly. Trials, He knew, were before them, and His great heart of love went out to them in tender pity and sympathy. As a manifestation of His love for them, He "took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." {RC 261.3}

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}

By the grace of Christ, perform every duty that has been made plain to your understanding, and you will be enabled to understand and perform those of which you are now in doubt. {SC 111.2}

When we are faithful in making God known, our impulses will be under divine supervision, and we shall make steady growth, spiritually and intellectually. {UL 81.4}

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}

The years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character.—GC 678 (1911). {1MCP 252.1}

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}

God’s work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power, to meet the wants of men in the different ages. Beginning with the first gospel promise, and coming down through the patriarchal and Jewish ages, and even to the present time, there has been a gradual unfolding of the purposes of God in the plan of redemption. {PP 373.2}

Promises are estimated by the truth of the one who makes them. Many men make promises only to break them, to mock the heart that trusted in them. Those who lean upon such men lean upon broken reeds. But God is behind the promises He makes. He is ever mindful of His covenant, and His truth endureth to all generations (MS 23, 1899). {7BC 942.12}

His heart was constantly burning with the love that brought Him from heaven to our world. His goodness and His power enabled Him to reveal in His life the truth that He came to this earth to bring to the fallen race. In every word, in every act, He manifested the love of God, cheering and encouraging the downcast and distressed. In heavenly wisdom He asserted His true

majesty by bending all things to the present and future happiness of human beings. He came to teach men and women how to live, here below, the life of which He gave them an example—the life that will make them fit to enter the abodes of bliss. {UL 229.3}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. . . . Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. But not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it is revealed in Christ. {SD 21.4}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. . . . {SD 21.5}

Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.—SC 11 (1892). {1MCP 250.1}

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new leaven; that there might be brought to mankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness. {Ed 76.2}

Christ came to this world as the expression of the very heart and mind and nature and character of God. He was the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person. But He laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and stepped down from His high command to take the place of a servant. He was rich, but for our sake, that we might have eternal riches, He became poor. He made the world, but so completely did He empty Himself that during His ministry He declared, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." {MM 19.1}

Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which flesh is heir. He has represented Him as a God who delights in the sufferings of His creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone human reason. {CT 27.2}

Heaven, looking down and seeing the delusions into which men were led, knew that a divine Instructor must come to the earth. Through the misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character. Those in ignorance and moral darkness must have light, spiritual light; for the world knew not God, and He must be revealed to their understanding. Truth looked down from heaven and saw not the reflection of her image; for dense clouds of spiritual darkness and gloom enveloped the world. The Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds; for He is the light of the world. By His presence He could dissipate the gloomy shadow that Satan had cast between man and God.—First published Nov. 17, 1891. {CT 28.1}

Christ alone could represent the Father to humanity, and this representation the disciples had been privileged to behold for over three years. {DA 663.5}

Had Christ come in His divine form, humanity could not have endured the sight. The contrast would have been too painful, the glory too overwhelming. Humanity could not have endured the presence of one of the pure, bright angels from glory; therefore Christ took not on Him the nature of angels; He came in the likeness of men. {TMK 25.4}

Looking upon Him, we behold the invisible God, who clothed His divinity with humanity in order that through humanity He might shed forth a subdued and softened glory, so that our eyes might be enabled to rest upon Him, and our souls not be extinguished by His undimmed splendor. We behold God through Christ, our Creator and Redeemer. {TMK 25.5}

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men, and yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. {8T 286.3}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {8T 286.4}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms. It is not as the result of a mechanism, that, once set in motion, continues its work, that the pulse beats and breath follows breath. In God

we live and move and have our being. Every breath, every throb of the heart, is the continual evidence of the power of an ever-present God. {6BC 1062.5}

When you search the Scriptures with an earnest desire to learn the truth, God will breathe His Spirit into your heart and impress your mind with the light of His word. The Bible is its own interpreter, one passage explaining another. By comparing scriptures referring to the same subjects, you will see beauty and harmony of which you have never dreamed. There is no other book whose perusal strengthens and enlarges, elevates and ennobles the mind, as does the perusal of this Book of books. Its study imparts new vigor to the mind, which is thus brought in contact with subjects requiring earnest thought, and is drawn out in prayer to God for power to comprehend the truths revealed. {4T 499.1}