

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

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

Lesson 11 “The Father, the Son, and the Spirit”

Read for this week’s study

John 14:10, 24; Genesis 3:7–9; John 16:27, 28; John 16:7–11; John 17:1–26.

Memory Text

“ ‘The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you’ ” (John 14:26, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Heavenly Father
- III. Jesus and the Father
- IV. Knowing the Son Is Knowing the Father
- V. The Holy Spirit
- VI. The Prayer of Jesus
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “John says that if you want to understand God, you must look at Jesus and what has been revealed in the Word. This approach opens to us a whole new world of relationships— among the three members of the Godhead, between the members of the Godhead and humans, and among humans themselves. This week’s lesson looks at how the Gospel of John presents the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but now within the context of the farewell discourse (John 13–17).” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson looks at the role of the Father. What are some of the roles of the Father, as described in the passages of the Gospel according to John (3:16, 17; 6:57; 5:22, 30; 6:32; 14:10, 24; 6:45; 15:16; 16:23)? Many people say that John is their favorite gospel. He uses the word “love”, in its various forms, almost sixty times as he writes about the life of Jesus. But there is a far more remarkable emphasis in his book. He uses the word “father” 132 times. And in all but eleven passages he uses the word to refer to the Heavenly Father! More than 120 times we are reminded that the Father has intimate contact with our world and a deep investment in our salvation. God is not an absent deity.
3. Monday’s lesson discusses the relationship between the Father and the Son. Why is it significant that after the breach that sin caused (Genesis 3:7–9), it was God seeking out Adam & Eve, and not vice versa?

4. Because the divine command in Eden was *misrepresented* before it was *violated* (Genesis 2:17-3:4; Romans 7:7-13), God's making things right had to address the *misrepresentation* and not only the *violation*. Thus, Jesus would come so that God may be rightly **understood**. Therefore, we see the attention to "the commandments of God as explained by the faithfulness of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).
5. Ten years after the Minneapolis GC session, EGW wrote in her newly published book, *The Desire of Ages*: "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived." "The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life." (both DA 530)
6. How does knowing the Son mean knowing the Father (7:16; 8:38; 14:10, 23; 15:1, 9, 10; 16:27, 28; 17:3)? (Tuesday's lesson) How can this understanding transform our everyday living?
7. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in conversion (John 1:10–13)? (Wednesday's lesson) What is the role of the Advocate or Comforter in John (chs. 14-16)? What did Jesus mean by his astonishing claim in 14:12: "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father"?
8. How does Jesus prepare himself for the "hour" (17:1-26)? (Thursday's lesson) How is this prayer a summary of all Jesus lived and taught? As Jesus returns to the Father, his family will be expanding: "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." (17:18) His disciples will bring others to become members of God's joyful, glorious and eternal family.
9. In relationships, unity cannot be forced, it cannot be bullied or manipulated. How can we model this in humility, not arrogance; in diversity, not uniformity? Jesus prays for more than unity among his followers. He prays for a relationship like the one found between the Father and the Son (John 17:11-23). Christ wants the oneness of His church to be modeled after the community of the Godhead in heaven.
10. Christ died to save sinners in order to integrate them into his body that he calls his bride. Christ died to establish a new type of community which is patterned after the relationships between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.
11. Anytime we deprive relationships and community of their rightful place in our thinking and lives, or replace them with anything else, the reality is sadly distorted, the quality of our lives is diminished, and we suffer greatly. As Adventists, (together with evangelicals and other conservative Protestants), we tend to greatly stress the importance of sound biblical doctrine. We may even pride ourselves at times about our effort to make our doctrine (and exegesis) strictly biblical. But however crucial the proper biblical doctrine is, ultimately doctrinal orthodoxy is not and cannot be the goal of Christian life. Orthodoxy without orthopraxy is useless. "Knowledge puffs up," if it is not in a context of a loving community (1 Cor 8:1).
12. The purpose of our Christian experience is not to define the theological truth into minutest details, or to concentrate on our own personal purity and wellness, but to enrich and inspire others in compassion and other-centered service so that together we may experience the community and oneness which is so essential for God.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Just to show the unity of the three members of the Godhead there's an extraordinary place in Isaiah 9 that we sing every Christmas when we sing the *Messiah* and the significance of that can't be over-emphasized. Think how many times you've sung this. Isaiah 9:6. Now this is not the baby in Isaiah 7, you know, there was a baby born there and before he was old enough to say, "My father" and "My mother" the two kings who were besieging Jerusalem were driven off. Then Isaiah goes on to a much more important baby in Isaiah 9 and says:

To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Wonderful Counsellor [now to whom do we usually give the name 'Counsellor' or comforter? Isn't that usually the Holy Spirit? But this child is called Wonderful Counsellor. How about], Mighty God [who comes first to mind with Mighty God? Don't you think of the Father? And then how about the next], Everlasting Father [you mean the Son will be called Everlasting Father? And the next], Prince of Peace [now there's one that seems to belong].

We have all the titles of the Trinity here attributed to the Son. The Son will be the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace—all of them. No wonder Jesus said in John 14, 15, and 16, "I and the Father are one. If you've seen me, you've seen the Father. The Father's in union with me and I'm in union with the Father. And if I go, I'll send you another counselor," just like myself the Greek says. It's a word that means "the same as I am." "And He too will lead you into truth just as I told you I am the truth, the way, and the life. And He will convince you of sin and righteousness and judgment, be your teacher and your comforter."

See, all three members of the Godhead have the same purposes and the same goals, but they seem to have assumed different roles for the benefit of their children throughout the universe. As Christ moved among the angels as Michael the Archangel, so He moved among us as Jesus the man born in Nazareth. Often misunderstood, these condescension's on God's part, but if you wonder if the Son was really God read Isaiah 9:6. Could it be stronger? That all those titles of divinity and deity belong to the Son. I think it's a great key text in there to put with Hebrews 1. Think of the potent verses in Hebrews 1 that the one who came was God. Then put Isaiah 9:6 with it along with others. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Hebrews, #5 & 6, recorded October 25, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/9MMHEBREWS66> <http://pkp.cc/10MMHEBREWS66>

Further Study with Ellen White

We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds.—*Manuscript 66*, 1899. (From a talk to the students at the Avondale School.) {Ev 616.5}

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the three holy dignitaries of heaven, have declared that they will strengthen men to overcome the powers of darkness. All the facilities of heaven are pledged to those who by their baptismal vows have entered into a covenant with God (MS 92, 1901). {5BC 1110.8}

Having undertaken the work of man's redemption, the Father would spare nothing, however dear, which was essential for the completion of His work. He would make opportunities for men; He would pour upon them His blessings; He would heap favor upon favor, gift upon gift, until the whole treasury of heaven was open to those whom He came to save. Having collected all the riches of the universe, and laid open all the resources of His divine nature, God gave them all for the use of man. They were His free gift. What an ocean of love is circulating, like a divine atmosphere, around the world! What manner of love is this, that the eternal God should adopt human nature in the person of His Son, and carry the same into the highest heaven! {TMK 19.2}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in his wings" (Malachi 4:2). {RC 23.3}

The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant. So surely as there never was a time when God was not, so surely there never was a moment when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest His grace to humanity. {FLB 76.4}

The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. {FLB 45.2}

He who fed the multitude with five loaves and two small fishes is able today to give us the fruit of our labor. He who said to the fishers of Galilee, "Let down your nets for a draft," and who, as they obeyed, filled their nets till they broke, desires His people to see in this an evidence of what He will do for them today. The God who in the wilderness gave the children of Israel manna from heaven still lives and reigns. He will guide His people and give skill and understanding in the work they are called to do. He will give wisdom to those who strive to do their duty conscientiously and

intelligently. He who owns the world is rich in resources, and will bless everyone who is seeking to bless others. {MH 200.2}

Christ is the truth of all that we find in the Father. The definition of heaven is the presence of Christ (Und. MS 58). {7BC 989.9}

The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour's life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man's redemption. {SC 21.2}

The heart of Infinite Love yearns after those who feel powerless to free themselves from the snares of Satan; and He graciously offers to strengthen them to live for Him. "Fear thou not," He bids them; "for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." . . . {CC 235.4}

He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. {ML 289.5}

God is to us a tender, compassionate, heavenly Father. {ML 289.6}

God had power to hold Adam back from touching the forbidden fruit; but had He done this, Satan would have been sustained in his charge against God's arbitrary rule. Man would not have been a free moral agent, but a mere machine (RH June 4, 1901). {1BC 1084.2}

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. {MB 127.1}

In His interest for His children, our heavenly Father personally directed their education. Often they were visited by His messengers, the holy angels, and from them received counsel and instruction. Often as they walked in the garden in the cool of the day they heard the voice of God, and face to face held communion with the Eternal. His thoughts toward them were "thoughts of peace, and not of evil." Jeremiah 29:11. His every purpose was their highest good. {Ed 21.1}

For our sake Jesus emptied Himself of His glory; He clothed His divinity with humanity that He might touch humanity, that His personal presence might be among us, that we might know that He was acquainted with all our trials, and sympathized with our grief, that every son and daughter of Adam might understand that Jesus is the friend of sinners (ST April 18, 1892). {7BC 927.1}

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. Since sin brought separation between man and his Maker, no man has seen God at any time, except as He is manifested through Christ. {MH 419.1}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {MH 419.4}

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. {FE 179.3}

The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house. The prodigal son in his wretchedness "came to himself." The deceptive power that Satan had exercised over him was broken. He saw that his suffering was the result of his own folly, and he said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father." Miserable as he was, the prodigal found hope in the conviction of his father's love. It was that love which was drawing him toward home. So it is the assurance of God's love that constrains the sinner to return to God. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Romans 2:4. A golden chain, the mercy and compassion of divine love, is passed around every imperiled soul. The Lord declares, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3. {COL 202.1}

The infinite love of God has been manifested in the gift of His only-begotten Son to redeem a lost race. Christ came to the earth to reveal to men the character of His Father, and His life was filled with deeds of divine tenderness and compassion. {PP 469.2}

In Christ the character of the Father was revealed. As children looked upon His countenance, they saw purity and goodness shining forth from His eyes. In His countenance gentleness, meekness, love, and conscious power were combined. But though every word, every gesture, every expression of His face, betokened His divine supremacy, humility marked His deportment and bearing. He came but for one purpose, and that was the salvation of the lost. {ML 300.4}

Those who receive Him and believe in Him become the spiritual children of God. They are adopted into the royal family, and as they seek to do the will of God, they become conformed into His image. {SD 230.6}

The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through cooperation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {ML 49.4}

The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest

short of the fullness. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.” {DA 302.1}

It is not the will of God that His people should be weighed down with care. But our Lord does not deceive us. He does not say to us, “Do not fear; there are no dangers in your path.” He knows there are trials and dangers, and He deals with us plainly. He does not propose to take His people out of a world of sin and evil, but He points them to a never-failing refuge. . . . {TMK 225.2}

The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. In mind, in purpose, in character, they are one, but not in person. By partaking of the Spirit of God, conforming to the law of God, man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ brings His disciples into a living union with Himself and with the Father. Through the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind, man is made complete in Christ Jesus. Unity with Christ establishes a bond of unity with one another. This unity is the most convincing proof to the world of the majesty and virtue of Christ, and of His power to take away sin (MS 111, 1903). {5BC 1148.3}

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}

The rabbis had a saying that there is rejoicing in heaven when one who has sinned against God is destroyed; but Jesus taught that to God the work of destruction is a strange work. That in which all heaven delights is the restoration of God’s own image in the souls whom He has made. {COL 190.1}

Recommended Reading: “God Made Manifest in Christ” – *The Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890
<https://egwwritings.org>