

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

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

### Lesson 13 “Epilogue: Knowing Jesus and His Word”

#### Read for this week’s study

John 21; John 11:9, 10; John 8:42–44; John 4:46–54; 2 Timothy 3:16; John 15:1–11.

#### Memory Text

“ ‘You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me’ ” (John 5:39, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. Meeting in Galilee
- III. Keeping Your Eyes on Jesus
- IV. Light and Darkness
- V. Theology From “Above” or From “Below”
- VI. Abiding in Jesus
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This final lesson on John deals with that meeting but integrates it with the theme of how we know Jesus and the Word of God—a concept that runs through the fourth Gospel. [...] In our last week in John, we will look at some of this Gospel’s key points, which can help us move beyond the mere head knowledge of Jesus to, instead, knowing Him better and more closely abiding in Him and in His Word.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson discusses John 21:1-19. What is the context of this story? How do the three preceding stories relate to this one? Why does Peter go fishing? About half of the things that Peter proposed in the gospel were from good motivations but bad judgement. How is the outcome of the disciples’ effort related to Luke 5:4-7? Why did John tell this story (cf. 20:21)?
3. Monday’s lesson focuses on the encounter of Jesus and Peter (21:20-22). How did comparing himself with John lead Peter down a wrong path? How many times have you and I been invited to follow Jesus and step into who we really are only to get side-tracked and distracted by comparing ourselves with others, or asking questions about others, and miss the unique path God has for us? Unlike Peter, John’s job was

not to lead the Jesus Movement, but rather to spend his long life bearing witness to Jesus so that others might believe in Him. And that's just what he did by authoring this amazing story about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. And how many people have been blessed by this unique Gospel throughout the centuries! When we cease to be surprised by God, maybe it's time to stop doing business with Him.

4. After concluding the last story of the Gospel, the author of the quarterly picks up the contrast between Light and Darkness. What is a legitimate use of this metaphor and how can it be abused (Tuesday's lesson)? (See 8:42-44 in light of 1:4-10; 3:19-21; 5:35; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9, 10; and 12:35.)
5. Wednesday's lesson compares and contrasts theology from "above" with theology from "below" based on the story of the official's son (4:46-54). After the rebuke from Jesus, the man believed the word of Jesus without first seeing the miracle (53-55). Why is this important in the fourth gospel (20:29)? To what extent does your life feel like a walk from Cana to Capernaum (20 miles/32 kms)?
6. How do we abide in Jesus (15:1-11)? (Thursday's lesson) How do we keep a balance with 12:32, and at the same time, remember that this is highly individual in the fourth gospel (cf. Nicodemus, Jesus' brothers)?
7. Of all the stories in the book of John, which one speaks the loudest to you about the love and character of God? According to John, there is unity and intimacy between the eternal Word and the Creator God, Jesus and his Father. The believers are invited to enter into this creatively powerful yet deeply intimate divine unity. Transformed by the power of God, mortals become members of God's eternal family (1:12).
8. What began with the original creation "in the beginning" concludes with God's new creation: believers who abide with and in each other and in the divine family. Our lives, in the power of the spirit, can make a difference in the world. Jesus' disciples are sent into 'the world' which remains the object of God's saving love, the reason why Jesus died (3:16). How will your life and the world be different because we spent 13 weeks studying this Gospel?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: As I was listening to your presentation this evening, I couldn't help but feel like—it seems that you are asking so much of us by way of having to think and to study. There's a bumper sticker around that many have seen on the back of cars, which says, "God said it. I believe it. That's all there is to it." That sounds refreshingly simple. Why wouldn't that be the appropriate way to go? To say: "Now here's real faith! If it's there, I'll just read it, and that's it."

Graham: The difficulty is that people pick the passages from the Bible that they want to label in that way, and they don't read all the others. For example, you read through where it says,

“Take the tithe and buy strong drink with it, and rejoice before the Lord.” Or you read another passage, “Give wine to the poor, that they may forget their misery.” “God has said it. I believe it. That’s all there is to it.” You really can’t do that. On the other hand, it could be an expression of humility and teachableness which would be very commendable. I would just suggest that those who use that bumper sticker live up to it. Because they are going to read **everything** God says. They’re going to read all of Scripture, which warns us of the hazard of plucking pieces out like that; but instead to read the Bible as a whole.

Lou: So you are pushing us at the point of meaning. We just cannot simply jump around here and there and say that’s what it means. The overall view, as that final statement in your talk so beautifully states it, and in the context. So there just is not an easy way to get around this.

Graham: The Bible says, “All Scripture is inspired of God.” So if that bumper sticker means I’m reading it all, then I’m comfortable with it.

Lou: Then you’re comfortable with it—but would you suggest a better bumper sticker, perhaps?

Graham: Yes, I’ve often wondered what would be an appropriate one that I’d be willing to put on my car.

Lou: You could print one up and offer it to us here?

Graham: I’ve wondered about this: “Thank You for the evidence. Thank You for making it so clear. And thank You most of all for what it cost.” It would take a big bumper. It would take an old car to have that much room. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #6 with Lou Venden, “Evaluating the Evidence” recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/6MMCAG>*

Rote, mechanical, legalistic, unthinking obedience implies a rote, mechanical, unthinking, legalistic, arbitrary God. And those who God chose to be His spokesmen to the world turned out to be the most serious perverters of the truth. To the extent that, when Christ came to set them right and give them a correct picture of God, it was His family, His Sabbath-keeping saints in the Promised Land, who killed Him rather than accept the truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Galatians, #3, recorded March 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/3MMGALATIANS66>*

In the introduction to his letter to the believers in Rome, Paul states his conviction that he had been specially commissioned to bring about a new kind of obedience. It was to be different

from the kind of obedience he himself had offered before he met Jesus on the Damascus road. It was to be what he calls literally “obedience of faith,” “obedience of trust.”

“Law-obedience” is what Paul used to practice with such zeal, and he was not at all pleased with the results. It had made him intolerant toward other people, even cruel. “Law-obedience” had actually led him to violate the whole spirit of God’s law, the law of love.

By now urging “faith-obedience” or “trust-obedience,” is Paul doing away with the law? “By no means!” Paul exclaims. “On the contrary, we uphold the law.” (Romans 3:31, NSRV) Phillips interprets, “We put the Law in its proper place.”

One proper place for the law has been to serve as “our attendant on the way to Christ.” But the ultimate place is the one Jeremiah described. Paul agrees with the prophet. What the law requires may be written on the heart—the place, Paul explains to the Romans, where the conscience is active and people do their thinking. (See Romans 2:15)

“Trust-obedience” is the kind that results from “knowing” God, in the full meaning of that word. It comes from learning the truth about him and his use of law. It is the result of being won back to trust him as a Friend, to admire him for his wise and gracious ways.

This means that the Spirit of Truth has succeeded in writing the law “on our hearts.” Now we freely do what the law requires, not because we’ve been ordered to, but because we’re convinced in our own minds that what the law requires is right. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 103-104. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<https://speakingwell.wpengine.com/written-materials/servants-or-friends/servants-or-friends-chapter-8>

Could you say, “I do what I do as a Christian because I’m finding the longer I live the more it is right and sensible to do so. And I’m seeing that more, the longer I live. And I have great and increasing admiration and respect for the one who so commanded me, in the days of my ignorance and immaturity, when the only reason why I did those good things or avoided those bad things was that He told me to. And He had the power to reward and destroy. Or I loved Him and wanted to please Him. At least it protected me. But I’ve come to the place now where I’m more and more beginning to do what’s right because it is right. And I haven’t had to think, ‘There’s a command not to murder my mother-in-law,’ for a whole year. And my mother-in-law has never been so safe!” You see, if you have to check the ten commandments every morning not to murder your mother-in-law, your mother-in-law is walking on thin ice all the time. I think because God loves mothers-in-law, and knows our tendencies, He had to say, “Thou shalt not murder thy mother-in-law.” Shame on us that we required that!

What an awful moment in God's family, when He had to gather His children around and say, "I want all the murdering and the hating to stop. And I want all the stealing, and the cheating, and the lying, and the immorality to stop. Please!" That means it was going on. There was a day when God didn't have to do that, and there's a day coming when He won't have to do it again. You remember the new covenant? It will all be written in our hearts, and we will do what is right because it is right. God will not have to lecture us a million years down the line and say, "I want all the murdering up here in heaven to stop." We won't have hated a soul for a million years. We'll be doing what's right because it is right.

Now if you heard your children behind the door saying, "Let's do what our folks want. I mean, you'll have to admit that everything they've asked us to do makes such good sense, we ought to want to do it anyway." And you get the impression that even after you're dead and gone, your children will go on doing what's right because it is right. Because now they're maturing, and they've come to see. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Galatians*, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>*

### **Recommended Listening:**

Conversations About God #18 "God Waits for His Children to Grow Up" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG>

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high. {DA 669.2}

The deep necessity of man for a divine teacher was known in heaven. The pity and sympathy of God were exercised in behalf of man, fallen and bound to Satan's chariot-car; and when the fullness of time was come, He sent forth His Son. The One appointed in the counsels of heaven came to the earth as an instructor. He was no less a being than the Creator of the world, the Son of the Infinite God. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world; and to meet the necessities of humanity, He took on Him human nature. To the astonishment of the heavenly host, He walked this earth as the Eternal Word. Fully prepared, He left the royal courts to come to a world marred and polluted with sin. Mysteriously He allied Himself to human nature. "The

Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” God’s excess of goodness, benevolence, and love was a surprise to the world, of grace which could be realized, but not told. {FE 399.4}

Christ came to the world to bring back the character of God to humankind, and to retrace on the human soul the divine image. Through His entire life Christ sought by continuous, laborious efforts to call the world’s attention to God and to His holy requirements in order that people might be imbued with the Spirit of God, might be actuated by love, and might reveal in life and character the divine attributes. . . . {CTr 249.4}

The Sun of Righteousness did not burst upon the world in splendor, to dazzle the senses with His glory. It is written of Christ, “His going forth is prepared as the morning.” Hosea 6:3. Quietly and gently the daylight breaks upon the earth, dispelling the shadow of darkness, and waking the world to life. So did the Sun of Righteousness arise, “with healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2. {DA 261.3}

Resting in the love of Christ, trusting the Redeemer and Life-giver to work out for you the salvation of your soul, you will know, as you draw nearer and still nearer to Him, what it means to endure the seeing of Him who is invisible. God desires us to rest content in His love. The contentment that Christ bestows is a gift worth infinitely more than gold and silver and precious stones. . . . {HP 186.3}

All the heavenly intelligences were watching with intense interest the warfare that was going on upon the earth—the earth that Satan claimed as his dominion. Every moment was big with eternal realities. How would the conflict end? The angels looked for the justice of God to be revealed, His anger to be aroused against the prince of darkness and his sympathizers. But lo, mercy prevailed. When the Son of God might have come to the world to condemn, He came as righteousness and peace, to save not merely the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but all the world—every son and daughter of Adam who would believe on Him, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. What an exhibition of the love of Jehovah! This is love without a parallel. {TMK 19.3}

To those who receive Christ as a personal Saviour, the veil that conceals the glory of God from human discernment is drawn aside. With the eye of faith they behold eternal realities. {UL 213.6}

Thus Christ drew the people to Him. He was unfolding truths of the highest order. The knowledge He came to impart was the gospel, in all its richness and power. The sin bearer, He is alive to all the horrors which sin brings upon the soul, and He came to this world with a message of deliverance. {TDG 106.5}

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character are revealed. By the marvelous display of His love in giving “His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” the character of

God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. Through Christ our heavenly Father is made known as the God of love. {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 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. {5BC 1131.1}

Heaven, looking down, and seeing the delusions into which men were led, knew that a divine Instructor must come to earth. Men 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 moral darkness and gloom enveloped the world, and the Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds: for He was the Light of the world. By His presence He could dissipate the gloomy shadow that Satan had cast between man and God. Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Through the accumulated misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character. {FE 176.3}

The grace of Christ is not confined to a few. The message of mercy and forgiveness brought from heaven by Christ was to be heard by all. Our Saviour says, "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12). His blessings are universal, reaching to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples. Christ came to break down every wall of partition ... that every soul, whether Jew or Gentile, might be a free worshiper and have access to God.... {TMK 98.2}

Through varied channels the heavenly messengers are in active communication with every part of the world, and when man calls upon the Lord with a true and earnest heart, God is represented as bending from His throne above. He listens to every yearning cry, and answers, "Here am I." He raises up the distressed and oppressed. He bestows His blessings on the evil as well as on the good. {TMK 98.3}

The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. We do not see Christ and speak to Him, but His Holy Spirit is just as near us in one place as in another. It works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of the Spirit reveal the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (MS 41, 1897). {6BC 1112.1}

If we have on the heavenly armor, we shall find that the assaults of the enemy will not have power over us. Angels of God will be round about us to protect us (RH May 25, 1905). {6BC 1119.4}

In His dealing with sin, God could employ only righteousness and truth. 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 before the angels, claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of heaven; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. Therefore it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of heaven, as well as of all the worlds, that God's government was 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. {GC 498.1}

Determined to efface the image of God in man, Satan works with an intensity of effort to hide God from view. Not openly does he work, but secretly, mingling the human and the divine, the spurious and the genuine, so seeking to bring confusion and distress. But in proportionate power divine mercy is revealed to counteract this wicked working, and bring to light the enemy's hidden purposes. {TDG 308.5}

The Lord speaks to human beings in imperfect speech, in order that the degenerate senses, the dull, earthly perception, of earthly beings may comprehend His words. Thus is shown God's condescension. He meets fallen human beings where they are. {7BC 946.1}

The Scriptures were given to men, not in a continuous chain of unbroken utterances, but piece by piece through successive generations, as God in His providence saw a fitting opportunity to impress man at sundry times and divers places. Men wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. There is "first the bud, then the blossom, and next the fruit," "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." This is exactly what the Bible utterances are to us. {7BC 945.5}

When we search the Word of God, angels are by our side, reflecting bright beams of light upon its sacred pages. The Scriptures appeal to man as having power to choose between right and wrong; they speak to him in warning, in reproof, in entreaty, in encouragement.—RH, Mar 4, 1884. {1MCP 92.2}

The Bible is its own expositor. One passage will prove to be a key that will unlock other passages, and in this way light will be shed upon the hidden meaning of the word. By comparing different texts treating on the same subject, viewing their bearing on every side, the true meaning of the Scriptures will be made evident. {FE 187.2}

The Bible is its own interpreter. With beautiful simplicity one portion connects itself with the truth of another portion, until the whole Bible is blended in one harmonious whole. Light flashes forth from one text to illuminate some portion of the Word that has seemed more obscure. {OHC 207.5}

The Bible is full of knowledge, and all who come to its study with a heart to understand, will find the mind enlarged and the faculties strengthened to comprehend these precious, far-reaching truths. The Holy Spirit will impress them upon the mind and soul. {FE 449.2}



He [Christ] maintained His disguise till He had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in His life, His character, His mission to earth, and His death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not because it was supported by His personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of His life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. {ST, October 6, 1909 par. 8}

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 the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. {COL 333.1}

In the divine arrangement God does nothing without the cooperation of man. He compels no man's will. That must be given to the Lord completely, else the Lord is not able to accomplish His divine work that He would do through the human agency. Jesus declared that in a certain place He could not do many mighty works among the people because of their unbelief. He wanted to do for them in that place just what He knew that they needed to have done, but He could not because unbelief barred the way. The potter cannot mold and fashion unto honor that which has never been placed in his hands. The Christian life is one of daily surrender, submission, and continual overcoming, gaining fresh victories every day. This is the growing up into Christ, fashioning the life into the divine Model. . . . {TMK 55.4}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. So spiritual growth is attained through co-operation with divine agencies. {Ed 106.1}

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. {7BC 947.5}