

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**First Quarter 2025: *God's Love and Justice***  
**Lesson 6 "God's Love of Justice"**

**Read for this week's study**

Psalm 78; Jonah 4:1–4; Matthew 10:8; Matthew 21:12, 13; Jeremiah 51:24, 25; Romans 12:17–21.

**Memory Text**

"But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them; Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath" (Psalm 78:38, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. Love and Justice
- III. God Is Entirely Good and Righteous
- IV. God's Changeless Character
- V. A Repenting God?
- VI. Hold Fast to Love and Justice
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Facilitator: Jon Paulien**

1. In the Ancient Near East, the "gods" of the nations were not only fickle, immoral, and unpredictable, but they also commended atrocities, like child sacrifice. And even then, the pagan masses could not count on their favor. In stark contrast to the gods of the ancient world, Yahweh is deeply concerned about evil, suffering, injustice, and oppression. He is a God who loves justice. (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
2. According to the lesson, "Throughout Scripture, love and justice go together. True love requires justice, and true justice can be governed by and meted out only in love." Do you think this statement strikes the appropriate balance? Read Psalm 33:5, 85:10, 89:14, Isaiah 61:8 and Jeremiah 9:24. What do these texts have to say about God's concern for justice? Read Micah 6:8. What does God expect from those who

follow Him? Can the concept of justice be misused? Can you think of examples in today's world of perverted human justice? (Sunday's Lesson)

3. According to the lesson, God does not simply claim to love justice, but unwaveringly exemplifies that trait. God knows what is best for everyone, wants what is best for everyone, and continually works to bring about the best outcome for all involved. God only and always does what is loving, righteous and just. He never does any wrong. Does this summary statement express your own view of God? Read Deuteronomy 32:4, Psalm 9:7-8, 92:15, and 145:9-17. What do all these passages tell us about God? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Does God ever change? And if so, what in God changes and what does not? Read Malachi 3:6 and James 1:17. What do these texts imply about God's character? If a text says that God does not change, what kind of changelessness is the text talking about? Read 2 Timothy 2:13, Titus 1:2, and Hebrews 6:17-18. What do these texts teach about God? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Can God repent? If so, what would that mean? Read Exodus 32:7-14 and Jeremiah 18:1-10. What do you make of these descriptions of God's "relenting"? How do we reconcile these two texts with Numbers 23:19? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Deuteronomy 7:9 and Matthew 5:43-48. What do these verses tell us about God? Why does Jesus ask us to love our enemies? In what sense are we expected to be perfect? If God's justice is as perfect as His love, what would that be like? Revelation 15:3-4. Why do people marvel at God at the End? What does love and justice mean in our daily interaction with others? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. In your understanding, what is God's glory? (Friday's Lesson)
8. How important is it to recognize that God's glory is bound up with His goodness? (Friday's Lesson)
9. Have you ever questioned God's goodness? How did you work through that question for yourself? (Friday's Lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Is Jeremiah pleased that finally God's justice and wrath are being demonstrated? Do you remember Jonah? When God did not destroy Nineveh on time, was Jonah pleased? No, he wished they would be, because that would have proved that he was a good prophet. Was Jeremiah pleased that now they were getting what they so richly deserved? No, he was a much better friend of God than Jonah was. Jeremiah weeps because finally all that he had been predicting had come. How do you think Adventists should feel if finally in the end all the terrible things we have predicted will come? Will we say, "Well, that's good; God is keeping his promise, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,'" and I, in a sense of justice, will be deeply satisfied? Or would you weep? When the wicked die at the end of the millennium, how do you think God

will behave? Hosea 11, he'll cry? God is not willing that any should perish. Think of all the verses like that in the Bible. I think Jeremiah knew God very well. Think how they had treated him. Think how he had been abused, and no one would listen. And yet when the trouble came, he wept over them. I think it speaks very well of him. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Jeremiah & Lamentations*, recorded January 1982, 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 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/35MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/36MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

I have heard servants sometimes charge that friends lack a keen sense of justice. They do not leave room in their understanding of God for just and essential punishment. Their God is simply too weak and kind. "You have a marshmallow God," I heard one servant say.

The truth is precisely the opposite. Friend-believers have great concern about righteousness, which is the literal meaning of the Greek word often translated "justice." The English word "justice" comes from the Latin translation of the Greek. (Latin, "justitia")

Friends admire God's righteousness and would love to be like him. And to do what is right is, of course, to do what is just. But servants tend to think of justice in terms of retribution and punishment.

"I find comfort in the thought that some day God will bring retribution on those who have hurt me so much," I heard a believer say. "Now, I'm not asking for vengeance, you understand. I'm just asking for justice." {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 109-110. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

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

You remember in John 3 and John 12 Jesus says, "I don't condemn anybody. I didn't come to judge you. Oh there is something that will judge you in the last day. I won't be the one. The truth that I brought to you; it will judge you. If you like the truth, if you like the message about healing and salvation, and you trust me enough to accept it and follow it, all will be well. If you reject the light you reject the truth and the plan of healing. I won't condemn you then, but you will die, and I'll grieve as I give you up for the last time." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the

audio series Romans, chapter 14, recorded January 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/27MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/28MMROMANS66> Part 2)

But “under the demands of law.” That belongs to a very legal conception of what has gone wrong in the universe, which we discussed in our second conversation. That what has gone wrong is that we have “broken the rules,” and the law demands that God execute us for breaking the rules. And Jesus died so that somehow God could justly forgive us even though we have broken the rules.

I don’t think we have been able to make too much sense out of that. But it goes along with the other one, “satisfying justice.” Whose justice? I have friends who say, “If God does not give Idi Amin several days in the fire, I will not regard Him as a just God.” They have that feeling about the satisfaction of justice. And I think they really mean it, and I would respect them for that. I would love to relieve them of that burden. If I want to know why Jesus died, I should go right to the cross, and watch Him die, and hear His cry and see how the Father is involved, and then fit that back into Scripture. I don’t see Him fulfilling the requirements of a legal model. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, “The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence” recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>

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

With sorrow and indignation the angels heard the choice made by the people and the sentence passed upon Christ. But they could not interfere; for in the great controversy between good and evil, Satan must be given every opportunity to develop his true character, that the heavenly universe and the race for whom Christ was giving His life might see the righteousness of God’s purposes. Those under the control of the enemy must be allowed to reveal the principles of his government (MS 136, 1899). {5BC 1107.5}

The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side, as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness, seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression. {1SM 235.1}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character,

and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. {PP 33.2}

The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God's unchanging love. {PP 33.3}

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}

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}

Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best. {MH 417.3}

Our God has heaven and earth at His command, and He knows just what we need. We can see only a little way before us; "but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4:13. Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best. {8T 272.1}

Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice. Satan's hatred against God leads him to delight in destroying even the dumb creatures. It is only through God's protecting care that the birds are preserved to gladden us with their songs of joy. But He does not forget even the sparrows. "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Matthew 10:31. {8T 273.1}

All earthly powers are under the control of the Infinite One. To the mightiest ruler, to the most cruel oppressor, He says, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." Job 38:11. God's power is constantly exercised to counteract the agencies of evil; He is ever at work among men, not for their destruction, but for their correction and preservation. {PP 694.1}

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. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every

spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing is too small for His attention. {8T 260.1}

God's dealings with rebellion will result in fully unmasking the work that has so long been carried on under cover. The results of Satan's rule, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, will be laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The law of God will stand fully vindicated. It will be seen that all the dealings of God have been conducted with reference to the eternal good of His people, and the good of all the worlds that He has created. Satan himself, in the presence of the witnessing universe, will confess the justice of God's government and the righteousness of His law. {PP 338.4}

While there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power to meet the wants of men in the different ages, God's work in all time is the same. The Teacher is the same. God's character and His plan are the same. With Him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17. {Ed 50.3}

In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, fear not. Have faith in God. He knows your need. He has all power. His infinite love and compassion never weary. Fear not that He will fail of fulfilling His promise. He is eternal truth. Never will He change the covenant He has made with those who love Him. And He will bestow upon His faithful servants the measure of efficiency that their need demands. {PK 164.3}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. {DA 25.3}

We are not to think of God only as a judge and to forget Him as our loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this, for our whole spiritual life will be molded by our conceptions of God's character. . . . {TMK 262.2}

The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. It comes through the gentleness of the inspiration of His word, through the inward working of His Spirit, the fellowship of the soul with Him who is its life. The greatest manifestation of its power is seen in human nature brought to the perfection of the character of Christ. {7T 143.2}

**Recommended Reading:** *Testimonies for the Church Volume Five*, Chapter 90 "The Character of God Revealed in Christ" page 737-742. <https://egwwritings.org>