

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Lesson 4 “The Nations: Part 1”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 10:1–12; Genesis 12:1–9; 1 Samuel 8:4–18; Matthew 20:25–28; Revelation 18:1–4.

Memory Text

“ ‘Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed’ ” (Daniel 7:14, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Nimrod and Nineveh
- III. Abraham’s Call
- IV. Given What You Asked For
- V. The Rulers of the Gentiles
- VI. A Light to the Gentiles
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Daniel 7:14. The word “nations” here could also be translated “gentiles” in both Hebrew and Greek. One of the key elements of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation is worldly government, a succession of human attempts to control a planet that rightfully belongs to God. Human experiments in self-government have never worked. Even those expressing the highest ideals have always fallen short. The shortcomings of human governments is one of the main themes of Bible prophecy. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Eden was created as the ideal home for the human race. Once sin entered, God had no choice but to separate humanity from the Garden and the tree of life, at least for a time. Life became much harder for humanity, as the curses on the ground and childbirth took effect. Read Genesis 10:8-12. The rebellious worked on “solutions” to the problems caused by sin, including the building of cities like Ninevah and Babylon.

3. In Jewish understanding, the nations of the world were formed in the aftermath of the Flood, as outlined in Genesis 10 and 11. Abraham was called out of a couple of those nations. God's call to Abraham is directly in the context of the "nations", but also of the Garden of Eden. Read Genesis 12:1-3 and 1:26-28. Do you see any relationship between the call to Abraham and the creation and fall of the human race? Read Exodus 19:5-6. What was God's purpose for Israel? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Deuteronomy 4:5-9. How do you interpret these verses? How would you apply these concepts to our world today? Read Isaiah 19:23-25. How does this passage relate to the others in Tuesday's Lesson? (Monday's Lesson)
5. As originally established, Israel was not to have a human monarch, the way other nation's did. Their monarch from the first was God. So why did the elders of Israel ask for a king? Read 1 Samuel 8:4-18. How did God reason with them? What further safeguards regarding kingship had God already given? Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20. (Tuesday's Lesson)
6. The author of the lessons writes that the nation of Israel served to foreshadow the errors of the church. Do you agree with that? What does Paul have to say about that topic in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4? How does Jesus describe the ideal leadership of the church in Matthew 20:25-28? How do you apply the model of Jesus to real-life power structures? What happened to church governance as the centuries rolled on? Use an internet search to learn why Constantine moved the capital of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople. (Wednesday's Lesson)
7. What was God's intended role for His people in the world? Read Isaiah 49:6 and 60:1-12, comparing with Exodus 19:5-6. How is this applied in the New Testament (Luke 2:29-32 and Acts 13:47)? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. In Babylonian captivity God showed Israel what might have been if they had been faithful. The very head of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, was converted to the true God. The Persian king served as a type of Christ, releasing God's people from Babylon and returning them to the Promised Land. What does it tell us about how God views humanity that He would use rulers outside of Israel to accomplish His goals? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

That is why I like to notice as we read from Genesis to 1 John 3:4 that sin has often been described, and not precisely in John's terminology. Of course we don't translate him correctly. We say, "sin is the transgression of the law", and immediately we think of obedience as obeying the rules, and sin as breaking the rules; and death is the punishment for breaking the rules. Yes, God has talked to us like that. That's the way you talk to children, who are not prepared to act like adults and do what is right because it is right. But on the way to 1 John 3:4, which actually is, "sin is rebelliousness", and shouldn't have been translated the other way in the first place,

you pass Romans 14, “sin is a breach of trust.” Now we’re right back with the angels in the beginning, before they even knew there was a law, there was a violation of trust. That’s where it all started. But now you are talking to adults in those terms. Or James says, “sin is knowing what is right to do and not doing it.”

So, sin is a breach of integrity. It’s a failure to be trustworthy. And now we realize that sin is not some artificial, arbitrary thing, sin is a certain condition of the mind and the heart that makes one unsafe to have around. And God proposes to have this universe free and safe for eternity and He says, “I cannot save sinners, because they cannot be trusted.” And sin is being untrustworthy. Then you ask yourself, “am I trustworthy?” And Paul, who used to look at the rules, now began to look inside himself, and he found he wasn’t doing very well at all. No, he said, “All the good that I would do I don’t do.” Oh, he didn’t break the Sabbath and all the rest, but he realized that the tenth commandment, which says you shouldn’t even want to do what’s wrong, he was violating.

I think that we have been very superficial in our understanding of sin. And that is how so many can look over the ten commandments and say we are God’s chosen people. We keep all ten, especially the fourth. But that is exactly what the Jews could say who nailed Christ to the cross and went home to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. They had eaten nothing forbidden. They paid a double tithe. You name it, they had done it, and they were God’s enemies. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Revelation*, recorded August 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/79MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/80MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against men or women. He does not make them spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable them to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force them to receive truth. He leaves them free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If people resist evidence that is sufficient to guide their judgment in the right direction and choose evil once, they will do this more readily the second time. The third time they will still more eagerly withdraw from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course they will continue until they are confirmed in evil and believe the lie they have cherished as truth.—*Manuscript 126*, 1901 (*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, pp. 183, 184). {CTr 103.4}

Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must meditate upon the truth that has been presented to him. By earnest attention

and prayerful thought he must learn the meaning of the words of truth, and drink deep of the spirit of the holy oracles. {COL 59.5}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures. {COL 60.1}

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 did not design that His people should build up a wall of partition between themselves and their fellow men. The heart of Infinite Love was reaching out toward all the inhabitants of the earth. Though they had rejected Him, He was constantly seeking to reveal Himself to them and make them partakers of His love and grace. His blessing was granted to the chosen people, that they might bless others. {PP 368.1}

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}

Their obedience to the law of God would make them marvels of prosperity before the nations of the world. He who could give them wisdom and skill in all cunning work would continue to be their teacher, and would ennoble and elevate them through obedience to His laws. If obedient, they would be preserved from the diseases that afflicted other nations, and would be blessed with vigor of intellect. The glory of God, His majesty and power, were to be revealed in all their prosperity. They were to be a kingdom of priests and princes. God furnished them with every facility for becoming the greatest nation on the earth. {COL 288.3}

Jesus has given us an example in His life of purity and perfect holiness. The most exalted being in heaven, He was the most ready to serve. The most honored, He humbled Himself to minister to those who a short time before had been disputing as to who should be the greatest in His kingdom. {TDG 192.6}

Those who believe in Christ and walk humbly with Him, . . . who watch to see what they can do to help and bless and strengthen the souls of others, cooperate with the angels who minister to

those who shall be heirs of salvation. Jesus gives them grace, and wisdom, and righteousness, making them a blessing to all with whom they are brought in contact. The more humble they are in their own estimation, the more blessings they receive from God, because receiving does not exalt them. They make a right use of their blessings, for they receive to impart. {TDG 356.5}

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 40. {ChS 250.2}

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}

Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives. {PK 720.1}