

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

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

Lesson 5 “The Nations: Part 2”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 2:9–17; Daniel 2:31–35; Isaiah 17:12, 13; Daniel 7:1–3; Romans 3:10–19; Revelation 12:15, 16; Revelation 10:1–11.

Memory Text

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Psalm 46:10, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Very First Commandment
- III. Daniel 2
- IV. Daniel 7
- V. Between Land and Sea
- VI. Prophecy Again
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. It was never God’s intention for either Satan or humanity to fall. The rebellion of Satan, and then of humanity, was a tragedy of immense consequence. This week’s lesson continues the theme of the problems caused by the Fall and the desire for human government as opposed to God’s governance. These truths are powerfully revealed in the book of Daniel. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Genesis 2:9-17. The first use of the root word for “command” in the Bible is in Genesis 2:16. How is it that some knowledge can be forbidden? Isn’t it always useful to experience and to know more? Are there types of knowledge today that we would be better off not knowing? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and other Nineteenth Century thinkers attempted to convince the world that humanity is on a fast track upward. Many people, therefore, exuded a new confidence in human progress. World War I, however, quickly

- shattered those dreams. Humanity has advanced in a technological sense, but certainly not in a moral one. Read Daniel 2:31-35. What is the big picture of this passage in relation to human progress? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Compare Daniel 2:28 with 7:1. What do you draw from this parallel? Read Daniel 7:2. The lesson author suggests that the wind churning up the water represents the continual strife and turmoil among the nations. Do you agree? What biblical evidence could you cite? Read Daniel 7:3. What are the implications of this verse for human governments? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 5. According to the lesson author, "earth" often represents the ordered world or the land of Israel, while the sea refers to the Gentile nations that menace the land, namely Israel. One piece of evidence for this assertion is Revelation 12:15-16. What implications does this have for the interpretation of the land beast in Revelation 13:11? Contrast Revelation 13:11 with 13:1. What do you make of the contrast here between sea and land? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 6. The identification of the land beast with the United States of America was significant to the Adventist pioneers because that was the place where the Advent movement occurred in the context of religious liberty. Read Revelation 10:1-11. What do you think the Adventist pioneers saw in this text that pointed to the Advent movement? (Thursday's Lesson)
 7. What role can the accuracy of Bible prophecy play in the development of trust in God?
 8. In the end, all earthly accomplishments, no matter how grand, will be turned into dust. What impact should that have on our daily decisions today? (Friday's Lesson)
 9. How can we as believers strike a balance between following God and obeying the laws of whatever nation or government we live under?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

I wonder if tonight we could think back in imagination to the very dramatic events of that first week of this earth's history. The war had begun already in heaven. Satan had already leveled his charges and his accusations. One-third of the angels had already agreed with him that God is not worthy of our love and our trust.

Right in the middle of that devastating crisis, God invites His family to watch Him as He creates yet another world—this time, ours. How easily He could have created our world with a snap of His fingers, in just an instant of time. But in the dramatic and significant setting of the Great Controversy, He chose this time to do it in six twenty-four hour days. On the first day, all He said was, "Let there be light." That's all. And then days two, three, four, five, as God in

unhurried majesty and drama unfolded His plans for our earth. By the sixth day, what a beautiful place this was. Where now were Satan's charges that God was selfish?

I mean, look at the freedom. He created us in His own image with power to think and to do. And we know from human history that He created us free to either love and trust Him, or hate Him and spit in His face, because it has been done. And He created us able to do it! God even allowed Satan to approach our first parents at The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And He didn't hide that tree in some dark corner of the garden; He put it right in the middle near the Tree of Life, so that Adam and Eve would see it every time they came to that other tree. Look in Genesis 2:9: "In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (NIV)

Of course the God we know could be trusted not to allow our first inexperienced parents to be tested more than they were able to resist. You know He would not do that. And so Satan was only allowed to approach them at The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve were warned not to risk a confrontation with their wily foe. Isn't that the meaning of that famous key text, next on the list, in 1 Corinthians 10:13? "But God keeps his promise [or God can be trusted], and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm." (GNT)

You see, that tree was not put there as a test of obedience—an arbitrary test of obedience. That tree was put there to help them, to protect them. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was not placed there before sin, but after sin. If it was before sin, it was an arbitrary test. After sin, it was to help them and protect them like every other one of God's gracious laws. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10, "The Reminder of the 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/10MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

The angels cautioned Eve not to separate from her husband in her employment; for she might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. If separated from each other, they would be in

greater danger than if they were together. The angels charged them to follow closely the instructions which God had given them in reference to the tree of knowledge; for in perfect obedience they were safe, and the foe could then have no power to deceive them. God would not permit Satan to follow the holy pair with continual temptations. He could have access to them only at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. {ST, January 16, 1879 par. 21}

The symbolic representation by which God had revealed to king and people His purpose for the nations of earth, was now to be made to serve for the glorification of human power. Daniel's interpretation was to be rejected and forgotten; truth was to be misinterpreted and misapplied. The symbol designed of Heaven to unfold to the minds of men important events of the future, was to be used to hinder the spread of the knowledge that God desired the world to receive. Thus through the devisings of ambitious men, Satan was seeking to thwart the divine purpose for the human race. The enemy of mankind knew that truth unmixed with error is a power mighty to save; but that when used to exalt self and to further the projects of men, it becomes a power for evil. {PK 505.1}

It was taught by the Jews that before God's love is extended to the sinner, he must first repent. In their view, repentance is a work by which men earn the favor of Heaven. And it was this thought that led the Pharisees to exclaim in astonishment and anger. "This man receiveth sinners." According to their ideas He should permit none to approach Him but those who had repented. But in the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God's seeking after us. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way." Romans 3:11, 12. We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent. {COL 189.1}

The gospel invitation is not to be narrowed down and presented only to a select few, who, we suppose, will do us honor if they accept it. The message is to be given to all. When God blesses His children, it is not alone for their own sake, but for the world's sake. As He bestows His gifts on us, it is that we may multiply them by imparting. {MH 102.1}

Not one cloud has fallen upon the church that God has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork the work of God but He has foreseen. All has taken place as He has predicted through His prophets. He has not left His church in darkness, forsaken, but has traced in prophetic declarations what would occur, and through His providence, acting in its appointed place in the world's history, He has brought about that which His Holy Spirit inspired the prophets to foretell. All His purposes will be fulfilled and established. His law is linked with His throne, and satanic agencies combined with human agencies cannot destroy it. Truth is inspired and guarded by God; it will live, and will succeed, although it may appear at times to be overshadowed. The gospel of Christ is the law exemplified in character. The deceptions practiced against it, every device for vindicating falsehood, every error forged by satanic

agencies, will eventually be eternally broken, and the triumph of truth will be like the appearing of the sun at noonday. The Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth with healing in His wings, and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory. {2SM 108.2}

There is no caste with God. He ignores everything of the kind. All souls are of value with Him. Laboring for the salvation of the soul is employment worthy of the highest honor. It matters not what may be the form of our labor, or among what class, whether high or low. In God's sight these distinctions will not affect its true worth. The sincere, earnest, contrite soul, however ignorant, is precious in the sight of the Lord. He places His own signet upon men, judging, not by their rank, not by their wealth, not by their intellectual greatness, but by their oneness with Christ. The unlearned, the outcast, the slave, if he has made the most of his opportunities and privileges, if he has cherished the light given him of God, has done all that is required. The world may call him ignorant, but God calls him wise and good, and thus his name stands registered in the books of heaven. God will fit him up to do Him honor, not only in heaven, but on the earth. —*Gospel Workers*, p. 332. (1915) {Ev 566.1}