

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

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

#### Lesson 6 “Understanding Sacrifice”

#### Read for this week’s study

Isaiah 1:2–15; Hebrews 10:3–10; Exodus 12:1–11; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Haggai 2:7–9; Isaiah 6:1–5; Revelation 4:7–11.

#### Memory Text

“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation’ ” (Revelation 5:9, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. Futile Sacrifices?
- III. The Blood of Bulls and Goats
- IV. The Passover Lamb
- V. Jesus at the Temple
- VI. For You Created All Things!
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The lesson for this week seeks a fuller understanding of the sacrificial background to the scene in Revelation 4 and 5. We will begin by examining that text and then move to the biblical background in animal sacrifice.
2. Read Revelation 4. What is the key theme of this chapter? What does that theme tell us about God? Read Revelation 5. What would you say are the key words that drive this chapter? Does the Lamb actually join God on His throne (Rev 3:21; 5:5-7)? The chief characters in these two chapters are God, the Lamb, the 24 elders, and angelic figures (four living creatures, angels). What character is strikingly absent from these chapters? What does that tell us about the time when this grand scene takes place? Is there a hint of his presence in Revelation 4:8 and 12:10? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)

3. Compare Isaiah 1:2-15 with Isaiah 56:6-7 and Psalm 51:17. How would you react if someone got up in church and said some things like Isaiah 1:2-15? According to Isaiah 1:16-18, what does God really want from Israel? Why does God accept the sacrifices of foreigners in Isaiah 56:6-7? What do you understand by a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart (Psa 51:17)? Can you think of a time when you were “going through the motions”? How did you break out of that? What did God do to get through to you? (Sunday’s Lesson)
4. Some have criticized the entire concept of sacrifice, considering it to be cruel, harsh, and, in a sense, unfair. How would you respond to these perspectives? (Monday’s Lesson)
5. Read Hebrews 10:1-4. What does this passage have to say about the Old Testament sacrifices? If sinners were not actually saved by them, why offer them at all? (Monday’s Lesson)
6. Read John 1:29. What did John mean by “the Lamb of God”? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
7. Read Haggai 2:7-9. What does it mean that the post-exilic temple would be more glorious than Solomon’s temple? How did that happen? Read Matthew 12:6 and John 2:19-21. What does that say about Jesus? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
8. The lesson for today brings us back to Revelation 4-5, comparing it with Isaiah 6:1-5. Read Isaiah 6:1-5 and Revelation 4:7-11. What elements of these two visions are similar? What order of events do you see in both texts? In Revelation 5:12 Jesus is the lamb that was slain. How does the cross relate to these reactions? (Thursday’s Lesson)
9. Revelation 13 informs us that that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. What do you think that means? (Friday’s Lesson)
10. Why was the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the only way that the human race could be saved? (Friday’s Lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The people thought, “If we offer these sacrifices, it will somehow appease the anger of God, and He’ll be pleased.” And that’s been even carried down to the sacrifice of Christ, that if we point God to the fact that Jesus died in our stead, maybe His anger will be appeased. That’s the heathen view. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. These sacrifices were not to appease God. They were to say something to us that might lead us to be contrite, to be humble, to realize how serious sin is, and to say, “God, I really need not just to be forgiven, I need to be completely changed. A new heart and a right spirit, and all those things.” If the sacrifice of Jesus doesn’t lead us to that understanding, it does no good. And David was

beginning to understand that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – 2 Samuel, recorded November 1983, 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 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/15MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/16MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Now, is there a danger that we might leave too many of these very precious phrases and provisions just as phrases and say, “My Bible says without the shedding of blood there’s no remission of sin and I don’t know why. I know God knows why. I just want to know if He’s satisfied because I want to be saved.” Or is it right to reverently ask what does that really mean? Or is it possible that if we settle for the symbols without inquiring for the meaning, we would do exactly what many of the Jews did with the sacrificial system of the Old Testament? Did not that system become a great curse to them because they never asked for the meaning? And they never came to know God. They never thought that when they sacrificed a lamb it represented what we know it did.

Now what if we settle just for the highly symbolic language about the death of Christ and paying the price of sin, and without the shedding of blood there’s no remission of sin, and covered with the righteousness of Christ. Those are interesting phrases, but the meaning is not that clear. Should we settle for the phrases and be grateful that God is satisfied? I want to know what I must do to be saved, believe in all this He says, “These are complications beyond your understanding, but we had some real problems up here. In order for you to be saved I want to tell you we’ve taken care of it.” And I say, “Thank you, God, I believe it and I want to be saved.”

Or do we miss, then, what God paid such a price to reveal? I think He wants us to ask. Hence Ellen White’s wonderful, simple words in *Christ’s Object Lessons*: “Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must [learn the meaning of the words of truth].” Now what’s the meaning? And can we be reverent when we ask the meaning? You used the phrase a while ago. Is there a way in which we could press for the meaning without seeming to be just academic about it? I mean this is life and death to us to find the meaning. What do these things mean? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Hebrews, #4, recorded October 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/7MMHEBREWS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/8MMHEBREWS66> (Part 2)

The purpose of the plan of salvation is to restore that trust, to bring the rebellion to an end, and thus to establish at-one-ment once again in the whole universe. All of God's children are unavoidably involved.

Some seem to find it disappointing, even offensive, to learn that Christ did not die primarily for them. But unless God wins this war and reestablishes peace in his family, our salvation is meaningless. Who would want to live for eternity in a warring universe?

Without this larger understanding of a conflict that has involved the universe, it's hard to understand Paul's explanation that Jesus shed his blood to bring peace, reconciliation, and unity to God's children in heaven as well as on earth. But recognition of the war and its issues helps one to take a larger view of the cross and of the plan of salvation and atonement.

The kind of unity God desires cannot be commanded or produced by force or fear. In the course of human history, many tyrants have tried to maintain unity by terror and brutality. But that kind of at-one-ment does not last. Look at what has happened in a number of countries just in recent years.

The kind of at-one-ment God desires is described in the New Testament as a unity that is "inherent in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God." (Ephesians 4:13, REB) People who love and trust the same Jesus and the same God are naturally attracted to each other. The same truth about God that sets them free from tyranny and fear binds them together in the firmest kind of unity. Friends of a friendly God enjoy at-one-ment with each other.

This is where the meaning of the cross is so important. There can be no friendship and at-one-ment where there is fear. Calvary says there is no need to be afraid of God. When God says, "Be my friend," he's not saying, "Be my friend or I'll punish you severely; I'll even put you to death." You don't talk that way to friends—especially if you want to keep their friendship. And friendship is the whole purpose and meaning of atonement. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 164-165. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<https://speakingwell.wpengine.com/written-materials/servants-or-friends/servants-or-friends-chapter-12>

### Further Study with Ellen White

God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him. . . . {SC 43.2}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now,

and let us reason together” is the Creator’s invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world’s Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life. {RH, February 15, 1912 par. 4}

*Christ’s atonement includes the whole human family. No one, high or low, rich or poor, free or bond, has been left out of the plan of redemption.*—Letter 106, 1900. {7ABC 464.7}

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

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. {RH, April 5, 1887 par. 10}

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

Although Satan has misrepresented God’s purposes, falsified His character, and caused people to look upon God in a false light, yet through the ages God’s love for His earthly children has never ceased. Christ’s work was to reveal the Father as merciful, compassionate, full of goodness and truth. . . . The only begotten Son of God sweeps back the hellish shadow in which Satan has enveloped the Father, and declares, “I and My Father are one; look on Me and behold God.” *Manuscript 25*, 1890 (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, pp. 240-243). {CTr 225.6}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Therefore he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. . . . {HP 8.2}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world's Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life. . . . {HP 8.3}

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ's own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world. {6T 55.1}

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. {TMK 25.4}

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}

He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, can carry forward His great work harmoniously. That which appears to finite minds entangled and complicated, the Lord's hand can keep in perfect order. He can devise ways and means to thwart the purposes of wicked men, and He will bring to confusion the counsels of them that plot mischief against His people. {5T 754.2}

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all unto Me." {DA 626.1}

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. . . . But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. {DA 19.2}

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, “It is finished,” had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ’s victory. {DA 758.2}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758.3}