

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2025: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy Lesson 9 “In the Psalms: Part 2”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 46; Jeremiah 4:23–26; Psalm 47:1–4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17; Psalm 75; Revelation 14:6–12.

Memory Text

“Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Selah” (Psalm 67:3, 4, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Very Present Help in the Time of Trouble
- III. Hope Amid Turmoil
- IV. Under His Feet
- V. Wine and Blood
- VI. That Your Salvation May Be Known
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The Psalms also deal with key issues associated with sin and suffering, judgment, the battle between good and evil, the nature of justice and injustice, and persecution in great depth, exploring nearly every possible human emotion—from dark despondency to unbridled joy. [...] We read about individuals wrestling with the question of why doesn’t God address evil more directly and immediately, a question that no doubt we all have asked. [...] Are these not issues and questions that we, in our context today, wrestle with, as well? Which is why we will continue unpacking Psalms in order to learn more about these crucial truths.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson looks at Psalm 46. Unlike the memory verse (Psalm 67:3-4) it does not begin with a call to praise but offers praise to God who is present in Zion. It needs to be read in the context of Psalms 42-48 which begins Book II of the Psalter. The message is that there are powers of chaos, evil and war in the world and that God is present to tame those principalities and powers and bring refuge and peace. How can this be helpful in our lives today?

3. Martin Luther provided the most famous rendering of this psalm in his hymn “A Mighty Fortress”, which has inspired generations of worshipers. The opening words were frequently heard following the events of September 11, 2001 in the US. However, turning to this (and other similar psalms) in times of personal and national crisis, there is a danger that we equate ourselves (or our nation or church) with the ancient people of Israel. We then see God as unequivocally fighting on our side and justifying our actions against other people. Our fortress must be God, not our group, entity, nation or church.
4. What is Jeremiah 4:23-26 talking about? How will the destruction of the coming judgment on Judah make the earth uninhabitable (as if Genesis 1 never happened)? How does 4:27 bring a tiny glimmer of hope with the preservation of a remnant?
5. Tuesday’s lesson looks at Psalm 47:1-4. What was the purpose of this psalm sandwiched between the two songs of Zion in Psalms 46 & 48? What was its role in the temple liturgy? Why is this psalm used particularly for the Ascension Day?
6. What is Psalm 75 all about (prophetic judgment, divine speech, thanksgiving and instruction)? (Wednesday’s lesson) How does our belief in the future restorative justice of God lead us confidently to do justice ourselves in the present (75:10)? The congregation portrayed in the psalm is waiting for the reign of God to be realized, and thus waiting for justice. Such waiting brings anxiety and insecurity which drives the human desire to make efforts to bring security. But securing the future is ultimately in God’s hands.
7. Thursday’s lesson focuses on Psalm 67. How are the other nations drawn into the blessed “us” by the creator God (67:7)? Alongside the sustained commitment that God has to Israel the work of God cannot be contained only for and in Israel but always spills over into the larger horizon of other peoples (67:4 cf. 96:10a). The psalm entertains this larger vision of God so that the blessings given to Israel are readily extended to all of God’s beloved people.
8. What are some steps we can take to avoid being complacent about our role in God’s chosen community, while focusing also on the wider realization that God is constantly at work everywhere in the world? How can this psalm help us see that God is at work everywhere and none of us have a monopoly on God’s blessings for the future?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Is there a verse in the Bible that says that when Jesus died, He was given up? Romans 4:25 says Christ was given up for our transgressions. And many versions, with their reformation influence translate this “Christ was put to death.” There is nothing in there about being put to death. It says He was given up. To tie that in with the issue in the Great Controversy, God gave up His Son as if He were a sinner. Just as He will give us up, if we are real sinners at the end. Because

you can't force people to trust you, in a free universe, what can you do but give people up? When Jesus was given up, yes, He died.

So I believe there were three questions answered by Gethsemane and the cross. One: who is right, God or the devil? Is God a liar when He says sin results in death? The devil says, "Yes, God has lied to you." "You will not die" is the teaching of the devil. God says, "You will die. But it is not torture and execution at My hands." The devil developed the whole doctrine of hell to turn the universe against God. And God says that is not true. And I say, "Well, how do I know how the wicked are going to die?" He says, "Only one person has ever died the death as a result of sin. It's only happened once in all eternity. I died that death. I wouldn't ask any of you to prove the truthfulness of My word. This is the meaning of substitutionary death." Yes, He died in our place, but not for legal reasons. He died because He wouldn't think of asking anybody else to go through that painful experience to demonstrate the truth. Besides, our death wouldn't have answered it anyway. Because if our dying would have answered the question, then He might as well have let Lucifer die in the beginning.

But you remember the explanation. Had He left Lucifer to die, the universe would have misunderstood and assumed God had put him to death. So only by God coming, He said, "No one takes My life from Me. Nobody can kill Me. I'm going through this Myself. I have arranged this with my Father." And the universe looking on said, "The Father isn't killing the Son." God isn't killing God. And it was clear enough to them that they could say, "Our questions are answered." One: sin does result in death. Two: it is not torture and execution at the hands of our gracious God.

Only one thing left. "God, why were You so concerned that we understand this?" God says, "Because if you serve Me from fear, it will turn you into rebels—holy rebels." He says, "Come to Calvary." On Calvary, Jesus was tortured to death. By whom? The most devout, blueprinting Adventists the world has ever known. Absolutely dedicated to God, the scriptures, creation, Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, you name it. Jesus said, "You even strain gnats out of your goat's milk." Real health reformers. You couldn't fault them for a thing. You couldn't have disfellowshipped one of the people who crucified Christ. Their lives were apparently without blemish.

But they hated Him. They hated His picture of God. They killed Him to silence His unbiblical heresy. And the angels looking on said, "We thought, by sending Your Son to Palestine, You did that to get a good running start with people who already agreed with You. We didn't realize You sent Him there to prove this costly point, that if we obey You for the wrong reason, because we don't really know You, we could turn into Your worst enemies in the middle of our Sabbath keeping and our tithe-paying and our health-reforming." And that's why I think the biggest mistake the Adventist church could make in these last days is to have one tremendous revival in reformation, get out the blueprint, straighten out our lives, without spending much

more time on the picture of God. Because if we do the right things for the wrong reason, we'll do what some of the Jews did and become His enemies.

So I believe the cross was the only way to answer the questions. Without answers to the questions, there would be no peace, no freedom, no security throughout the universe. So it was for these specific reasons. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Questions People are Asking About the Plan of Salvation, recorded April 1983, Redlands, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMQUESTP> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMQUESTP> (Part 2)

The point is that we are being considered by our future neighbors and friends, and they're worried. Wouldn't you be if you were an angel? They're going to let some of us in. They had a war once before, and Satan capitalizes on this. Ellen White says he has an exact knowledge of every sin he's ever tempted us to commit. We sometimes think our sins are rather private, and when they're forgiven nobody knows them anymore. No, they know them. They're headlines throughout the universe. They're not forgotten. It wouldn't be fair to forget our sins and then put David's in the Bible. We preach about David's sins. Nobody's sins are hidden; they're all well-known up there.

And the devil arises and says, "Let me show you that God once more has made a mistake. He says Jones is safe to save." And he lists all the things he's tempted us to do. And Ellen White has a tremendous speech in his mouth. "Look at all the sins that have marked their disloyalty to God. Look at their selfishness", et cetera, et cetera. How he dares make such a speech is almost unbelievable! And then he points to all the records and says, "Look at all the sins they have committed." If you had just heard your life described, and it was put to the vote, would you vote for yourself? I mean would you hang your head and wonder what's going to happen? But then Christ arises, as she describes it, and He does not excuse our sins.

He says, "The devil has told the truth. Jones did everything he mentioned. In fact, due to the shortness of time, he left out a lot he could have mentioned." And there comes a murmur in the crowd and it's Jones' guardian angel, and he says, "Look, I was there, do you want me to fill in?" And the Lord says, "No, we've heard quite enough. Jones on the record looks simply frightful. But let Me tell you; that record is irrelevant, and it's out of date. It describes the kind of person Jones used to be. But Jones has a new heart and a right spirit within him. He was born as I told Nicodemus had to be, of the Spirit. This doesn't describe Jones."

You see, God is not concerned about our sinful past, He's only concerned about the kind of people we are now. And if I were an angel, I wouldn't be concerned with whether or not God had forgiven Idi Amin; I'd want to know if it was safe to live next door to Idi Amin. When the prophet Isaiah meets King Manasseh in the hereafter and he's innocently carrying a pruning

hook or something to prune his vines, the last time he held one in his hands he was sawing poor Isaiah in half in a hollow log. And will God say, “Well, don’t worry about him carrying that saw, I forgave him.” That wouldn’t reassure me at all. I’d want to know if he could be trusted with a sharp saw. And that’s why Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Not unless ye be forgiven.” No, He said, “Not unless you be born again.” It’s a healing ministry; new hearts, right spirits. David finally got the message and said, “Sacrifices won’t do it, I need a new heart, I need a right spirit, I need truth in the inner man.” Now he didn’t say, “I’ll stop offering sacrifices” because Christ hadn’t yet come. But he says, “I’m going to start offering them for a different reason now.” As Hebrews says, all the sacrifices were a constant reminder of sin, and that sin leads to death. He says, “I’ll go on doing that.” But no more were they sacrifices “to propitiate the wrath of God”, and things like that.

Well, I see this discussion going on in heaven. What chance do we have? Has God proved His ability to judge the human heart? Job showed that. And many other places. The last generation may show that. No angel can read our hearts; no angel can read our thoughts. If they could, they could have read Lucifer’s thoughts and known, they would have known he was a deceiver. They couldn’t read what his plan was. Only God can read our innermost thoughts. And so they have to look to God to say, “Is Jones really changed? Is he safe to save?” And when Jesus says, “Yes he is”, then they say, “Then we’ll welcome him at the gates.” And so, I think they have very legitimate questions. I mean, they should be afraid that we’re coming in. They have to hear Jesus say, “Don’t judge the man by the record. Let Me tell you, he’s not that kind of person anymore. He’s been changed.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Atonement and Your Picture of God, recorded May 1993, San Diego, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMAANDP> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMAANDP> (Part 2)

But in the larger great controversy setting, the gospel is the truth about our gracious God, the truth that ends the war, and confirms the loyalty of the universe, and wins some of us back to repentance and to trust. I believe (more strongly than I believe anything) that the most important of all our beliefs is the truth about our God. God is not the kind of person His enemies have made him out to be—arbitrary, vengeful, and severe. He is instead precisely as His Son revealed Him to be. We believe the testimony of Jesus when He said, “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.” God is just as loving and gracious as His Son; just as willing to forgive and heal.

Could there be any better news than that? To me, that’s the everlasting good news that holds the loyalty of the universe. And wins us back and will hold our loyalty and trust for the rest of eternity. And this is the message we have the high privilege of sharing with people all over this

planet, who may not know they are members of God’s family, but who deserve to know, and who deserve to hear this truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, “The Conflict in God’s Family” recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*
<http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>

So the first angel comes with the everlasting gospel, the everlasting good news. What is it? Well, everyone ought, perhaps, to state his own version. I had the privilege of putting it on the back of the invitation to these conversations about God. I wrote:

The good news is God is not the kind of Person His enemies have made Him out to be—arbitrary, unforgiving, and severe. Jesus said, “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.” God is just as loving and trustworthy as His Son, just as willing to forgive and heal. Though infinite in majesty and power, our Creator is an equally gracious Person who values nothing higher than the freedom, the dignity, and the individuality of His intelligent creatures—that their love, their faith, their willingness to listen and obey may be freely given. He even prefers to regard us not as servants but as friends.

This is the truth revealed through all the books of Scripture. This is the everlasting Good News that wins the trust and admiration of God’s loyal children throughout the universe.

Could you be dogmatic about that? That’s the only “truth” that is safe to be dogmatic about. To be like Paul and say, “Even if an angel came with a different picture of God, it is wrong, and I will not believe it.” To me, this is not a negotiable position. You see, one can be adamant, immovable, and dogmatic about freedom, because you never hurt anybody with that view. You are immovably committed to freedom, and to the picture of God as valuing nothing higher than the freedom of His children. To me, that is the essence of the message of the first angel. So the second angel comes and simply says, “The opposition has collapsed in corruption and defeat.” The third angel warns of the inevitable consequence of preferring Satan’s lies to this magnificent truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #16, “God’s Last Pleading with His Children” recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*
<http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

In the future life we shall understand things that here greatly perplex us. We shall realize how strong a helper we had and how angels of God were commissioned to guard us as we followed the counsel of the Word of God. {HP 257.3}

To all who receive Him, Christ will give power to become the sons of God. He is a present help in every time of need. {HP 257.4}

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will never betray your trust. If you will ask help of God you need not ask in vain. In order to encourage us to have confidence and trust He comes near us by His holy Word and Spirit, and seeks in a thousand ways to win our confidence. But in nothing does He take more delight than in receiving the weak who come to Him for strength. If we will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to find an ear to hear and an arm to save. {TDG 194.5}

Our God is a very present help in time of need. He is acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our hearts, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distresses, He is making arrangements for our deliverance.—Letter 73, Feb. 1, 1905, to Drs. D. H. and Laretta Kress. {UL 46.6}

Oh, that we could all realize the nearness of heaven to earth! When the earthborn children know it not, they have angels of light as their companions. A silent witness guards every soul that lives, seeking to draw that soul to Christ. {6T 366.1}

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.” He never becomes confused. He sits above the confusion and distractions of the earth, and all things are opened to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He can order that which His providence sees is best. {ML 10.4}

You must learn the simple art of taking God at His word; then you have solid ground beneath your feet. {ML 10.8}

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}

Since God is infinite, and in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, we may to all eternity be ever searching, ever learning, yet never exhaust the riches of His wisdom, His goodness, or His power. {Ed 172.2}

It was by deception that Satan seduced angels; thus he has in all ages carried forward his work among men, and he will continue this policy to the last. Should he openly profess to be warring

against God and His law, men would beware; but he disguises himself, and mixes truth with error. The most dangerous falsehoods are those that are mingled with truth. It is thus that errors are received that captivate and ruin the soul. By this means Satan carries the world with him. But a day is coming when his triumph will be forever ended. {PP 338.3}

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}

Nothing can happen in any part of the universe without the knowledge of Him who is omnipresent. Not a single event of human life is unknown to our Maker. While Satan is constantly devising evil, the Lord our God overrules all, so that it will not harm His obedient, trusting children. The same power that controls the boisterous waves of the ocean can hold in check all the power of rebellion and of crime. God says to one as to the other, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." {3BC 1141.5}

To Daniel was given a vision of fierce beasts, representing the powers of the earth. But the ensign of the Messiah's kingdom is a lamb. While earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power, Christ is to banish every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion. His kingdom was to be established to uplift and ennoble fallen humanity (Letter 32, 1899). {4BC 1171.5}

All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. {6T 63.3}

In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin. {COL 77.1}

As the wheellike complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations, He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of the earth. {Ed 178.1}

When self is hid in Jesus, we are shielded from the darts of the enemy (Letter 16a, 1895).
{7BC 908.1}

The Lord does not judge us according to the elevation of our various spheres, but according to the faithfulness with which we fill them. {6T 439.4}

There is in the Saviour's words another lesson, a lesson of wonderful forbearance and tender love. As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast. {COL 72.1}

The teaching of this parable is illustrated in God's own dealing with men and angels. Satan is a deceiver. When he sinned in heaven, even the loyal angels did not fully discern his character. This was why God did not at once destroy Satan. Had He done so, the holy angels would not have perceived the justice and love of God. A doubt of God's goodness would have been as evil seed that would yield the bitter fruit of sin and woe. Therefore the author of evil was spared, fully to develop his character. Through long ages God has borne the anguish of beholding the work of evil, He has given the infinite Gift of Calvary, rather than leave any to be deceived by the misrepresentations of the wicked one; for the tares could not be plucked up without danger of uprooting the precious grain. And shall we not be as forbearing toward our fellow men as the Lord of heaven and earth is toward Satan? {COL 72.2}

He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself, He presented a lesson appropriate to the time and the circumstances. Every neglect or insult shown by men to their fellow men only made Him more conscious of their need of His divine-human sympathy. He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as the children of God. {RC 27.4}

All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, ... that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. {TMK 99.5}

As the rays of the sun penetrate to the remotest corners of the globe, so God designs that the light of the gospel shall extend to every soul upon the earth. {AG 26.3}