

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2025: *Lessons of Faith From Joshua*

Lesson 5 “God Fights for You”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 15:16; Leviticus 18:24–30; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; Exodus 23:28–30; Deuteronomy 20:10, 15–18; Isaiah 9:6.

Memory Text

“And Joshua captured all these kings and their land at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel” (Joshua 10:42, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Canaanites’ Iniquity
- III. The Supreme Judge
- IV. Dispossession or Annihilation?
- V. Free Choice
- VI. The Prince of Peace
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Serious questions are raised by the concept of divine or holy war in which God mandates one group of people to annihilate another group. The main purpose of this week’s lesson is to show that biblical and secular history can only be rightly understood in light of the cosmic conflict. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Deuteronomy 18:9-14. What does this passage tell us about the behavior of the Canaanites around the time the Israelites arrived at the border. What does Leviticus 18:24-30 add to our understanding of this? What does Genesis 15:16 tell us about God? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Genesis 18:25, Psalm 7:11 and 96:10, and 2 Timothy 4:8. What do these verses say about the moral character of God? How does God’s 400-year delay with regard to the Canaanites relate to the gospel? (Monday’s Lesson)
4. Read Exodus 23:23, 27-30, Numbers 33:52, Deuteronomy 7:5 and 12:2-3. What was God’s ultimate plan for removing the Canaanites from the land, and why was this

necessary? What would it take to remove the Canaanites from the land without violence? Read Joshua 2:9-14. What other option did the Canaanites have according to this text? What happened to those who rejected that option and resisted (Josh 11:19-20)? What might be the equivalent of the Canaanite “objects of worship” in today’s world? (Tuesday’s Lesson)

5. We come now to God’s “Plan C”, the Deuteronomic “law of warfare”. Read Deuteronomy 20:16-18. What was God’s ultimate purpose in the dispossession/destruction of the Canaanites? What was God’s purpose for Israel in the land of Canaan (Exod 19:5-6; Gen 12:1-3)? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
6. What is God’s ultimate, ultimate purpose for the human race and for the universe (Isa 9:6; 60:17; Hos 2:18; Mic 4:3; Heb 2:5-9)? (Thursday’s Lesson)
7. One of the challenges in peacemaking is the great hostility people nurture on account of the grievances of the past. The Old Testament contains a story of how God deals with that kind of hostility. Read 2 Kings 6:16-23. (Thursday’s Lesson)
8. Think about the fundamental nature of free will. Why do you think God respects our freedom of choice? How are love and freedom of choice related to each other? (Friday’s Lesson)
9. The Old Testament contains many stories of war and conflict, but ultimately, it forecasts a vision of peace. Thinking specifically about the neighborhood where you live, what role should you or any other Christian play in establishing peace in that environment? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: “You spoke about sanctification. What is this? If we sincerely accept Jesus as our Savior, how can we ever be lost? Once we are saved, aren’t we always saved?”

Graham: “Sanctification” is one of those heavy Latin terms. I prefer to use “set right,” “keep right,” rather than “justify,” “sanctify.” We can understand those words. One can be set right with God, and one can be kept right for quite a while, but one is still free to leave. And Lucifer proved that by leaving. He was right with God before. There was no rebellion there. And so a million years into eternity, we may have been right with God for a long time, but we are still free to go.

The once saved, always saved idea belongs to a very legal model. I’m paid up, and I’m still paid up, and I have a right to be there. No, I’m only safe to have around if I’m willing to listen, to trust God, to accept instruction. And I’ll always be free to turn into a rebel. That makes it more wonderful that God’s children will choose to remain loyal. Then their loyalty means something. Their expression of love to God means something. They haven’t been reprogrammed, you know. They haven’t been turned into robots. The price, the cost that God has had to pay to

settle the questions indicates how absolutely opposed He is to over-controlling us and programming us and making it impossible for us to go some other way. That's quite a risk, but evidently freedom means that much to God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18 with Lou Venden, "Evaluating the Evidence" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/6MMCAG>*

The most important of all Seventh-day Adventist beliefs is the one that brings joy and assurance to Christians everywhere, the truth about our Heavenly Father that was confirmed at such cost by the life and the death of His Son.

We believe that God is not the kind of person His enemies have made Him out to be—arbitrary, unforgiving and severe. We accept the testimony of Jesus when He 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.

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.

And like Abraham and Moses—the ones God spoke of as His trusted friends—we want to speak well and truly of our Heavenly Father. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from written material, "What We Believe".} <https://pineknoll.org>

Further Study with Ellen White

Men put God out of their knowledge and worshiped the creatures of their own imagination; and as the result, they became more and more debased. The psalmist describes the effect produced upon the worshiper by the adoration of idols. He says, "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." Psalm 115:8. It is a law of the human mind that by beholding we become changed. Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower. The worshipers of false gods clothed their deities with human attributes and passions, and thus their standard of character was degraded to the likeness of sinful humanity. They were defiled in consequence. {PP 91.2}

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature, that by beholding, we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward. {GC88 555.2}

It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. {PP 596.2}

By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. {AG 302.5}

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}

God had chosen Israel. He had called them to preserve among men the knowledge of His law, and of the symbols and prophecies that pointed to the Saviour. He desired them to be as wells of salvation to the world. What Abraham was in the land of his sojourn, what Joseph was in Egypt, and Daniel in the courts of Babylon, the Hebrew people were to be among the nations. They were to reveal God to men. {DA 27.2}

Not merely in the minds of a few finite creatures in this world, but in the minds of all the inhabitants of the heavenly universe, has the immutability of God's law been established. . . . With one voice they extolled God as righteous, merciful, self-denying, just.—Manuscript 1, Jan. 6, 1902, "God's Justice." {TDG 14.6}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

God in His wisdom did not use measures of force to suppress Satan's rebellion. Such measures would have aroused sympathy for Satan, strengthening his rebellion rather than changing his principles. If God had summarily punished him, many would have looked upon him as one who had been dealt with unjustly, and he would have carried a much larger number with him in his apostasy. {CTr 289.4}

It was necessary to give Satan time to develop his principles. He has had every opportunity to present his side of the question. He has been artful. As often as his position has been seen in its true light, he has changed to some other position. By making false charges, and by misstating the purposes and declared will of God, he has secured sympathizers. {CTr 289.5}

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied. {Ed 77.1}

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

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}

Throughout the parable of the sower, Christ represents the different results of the sowing as depending upon the soil. In every case the sower and the seed are the same. Thus He teaches that if the word of God fails of accomplishing its work in our hearts and lives, the reason is to be found in ourselves. But the result is not beyond our control. True, we cannot change ourselves; but the power of choice is ours, and it rests with us to determine what we will become. {COL 56.1}

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}

Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. {TMK 57.2}

God had power to hold Adam back from touching the forbidden fruit; but had He done this, Satan would have been sustained in his charge against God's arbitrary rule. Man would not have been a free moral agent, but a mere machine (RH June 4, 1901). {1BC 1084.2}

Today the truths of Scripture are to be brought before the great men of the world in order that they may choose between obedience to God's law and allegiance to the prince of evil. God sets everlasting truth before them—truth that will make them wise unto salvation, but He does not force them to accept it. If they turn from it, He leaves them to themselves, to be filled with the fruit of their own doings. {AA 241.2}

It is not the plan of God to compel men to yield their wicked unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which to accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture (*Redemption: or the Miracles of Christ*, pp. 112, 113). {1BC 1120.5}

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. {MB 127.1}

The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife. {MB 27.3}

Christ's followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God is a peacemaker. {HP 35.4}