

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 1 “Jesus Wins—Satan Loses”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 12; Ephesians 5:25–27, 32; Philippians 3:9; Daniel 7:25; Isaiah 14:12–14; Revelation 13:14–17.

Memory Text

“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Battle in Heaven
- III. Satan’s Attack
- IV. Accepting Jesus’ Victory
- V. The Woman in the Wilderness
- VI. God’s End-time Remnant
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. When one studies fulfilled prophecies in the Bible carefully, one discovers that prophecy is often fulfilled in surprising or even unobtrusive ways. Jonah 3:4 predicts that in 40 days Nineveh will be “destroyed”. But the Hebrew word for “destroyed” is metaphorical. The root meaning is “turned upside down”. In what way was the prophecy actually fulfilled? (Quarter Introduction)
2. A core Seventh-day Adventist conviction is that the 2300 evenings and mornings of Daniel 8:13-14 cover the period of time from a Persian decree in 457 BC to the year AD 1844. Early Adventists assumed that the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 meant the earth. The “cleansing” of the sanctuary would be the destruction of the whole earth at the Second Coming of Christ. But no such thing happened in 1844. Taking a cue from prophecies like Jonah, they now understood that the end of the 2300 day/years involved two things: 1) Activity in heaven that is not directly observable

- from earth, and 2) the founding of an end-time movement that would preach the final gospel message to the world based on the book of Revelation (Rev 14:6-12, cf. Matt 24:14; Mark 13:10). But while Revelation 14:6-12 summarizes the final gospel message to the world, the message itself is much bigger than the content of that passage. (Quarter Introduction)
3. According to the lesson, the year 1844 is also significant for three reasons: 1) the birth of Friedrich Nietzsche, who provided the philosophical basis for current attacks against Christianity and Christian morality in the West, 2) the formulation of Marxist ideology, which provided a non-theistic approach to solving the world's problems, and 3) the date when Charles Darwin fully conceptualized the theory of evolution, undermining Christian views of human origins. So God raised up an end-time movement to counter the three destructive ideologies and help to heal the religious fractures of our time. (Quarter Introduction)
 4. The context of Revelation 14:6-12 is grounded in the introductory summary of Revelation 12-14 in Revelation 12:17. How are the two sides in the final conflict of earth's history described? What are the defining characteristics of each? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
 5. Read Revelation 12:7-9. Revelation 12:7 seems to follow verse 5 as a reaction to the male child's (presumably Jesus) ascension to heaven. What evidence is there to see this war in heaven as occurring much earlier? What kind of war is in view here? (Sunday's Lesson)
 6. Read Revelation 12:4-6, 9. With the help of Ephesians 5:25-27, 32 and Psalm 2:7-9, how would you define the main terms of Revelation 12 (dragon, woman, male child, rod of iron)? (Monday's Lesson)
 7. Read Revelation 12:10. What does it mean that the accuser of the brothers has been cast down? Read Revelation 12:11. What does it mean to overcome? How does the cross make that possible? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 8. Compare Revelation 12:6 with Revelation 12:14-16. What are the similarities and differences between the two accounts of the woman in the wilderness? On what basis do Adventists see the time periods here in terms of a year-day principle? Protestant interpreters have traditionally applied the work of the dragon here to the medieval church. How do we fit such negative assessments with the cosmic conflict and God's character of love? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 9. Read Revelation 12:17. What are the characteristics of God's last-day remnant in this verse? What other terms in Revelation seem also to apply to the remnant? What other characteristics of the remnant can be found in chapters 10-14? (Thursday's Lesson)
 10. In what ways is the cosmic conflict played out in our individual lives? In our country? In our church? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

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".}

But let's say we're covered by the righteousness of Christ. How does that actually work? Here's the Father, here are a hundred million angels of Daniel 7 as the court sits in judgment and the books are opened. My case comes up, and I have a dreadful record. But I don't need to worry, because I am covered with the righteousness of Christ, and fortunately God does not have 20/20 vision, and doesn't know the secret about what's inside! Jesus knows what's inside, and I'm sure my guardian angel knows what's inside, and the accuser of the brethren knows what's inside. In fact, he accuses me day and night before God and says, "Do you want to know what's inside? If God looks, does he say, "Nah, looks pretty good to me." I don't like the thought that I'm somehow sneaking into the kingdom in disguise. Someday God might learn the truth about me. If I am not changed inside, I'm not safe to have around. So this obviously is not for purposes of disguise. God knows. He knows me just as well as anybody else in the Godhead.

God says, "I not only forgive you, but I will treat you as if you had never sinned. In fact, I will treat you with dignity and respect, as if you'd always been my loyal children." To be covered with the righteousness of Christ is not a disguise. It means we'll be treated as if we had lived as righteously as the Son.

So, covered with the righteousness of Christ: What does it mean? I take it to mean that because Christ answered all the problems, he's not asking me to do it. He's asking me, "Do you want to respond to these answers, like the loyal angels have? Have you been won back to trust me? Are you willing to listen? If so, I can heal the damage done." And even though I am a pretty sick patient in my heavenly Father's eyes, God will treat me with dignity and respect, as if I had lived as nobly as his Son. I think that's the covering. I mean, he would really do this. He will treat me with dignity, and with respect, as if I had never been disloyal.

That's a statement. I'd want evidence for that. How about his treatment of the woman taken in adultery? Look at the way he treated her and sought to recover her dignity and self-respect. Look at the way he treated Peter and other people through the scriptures. He really does it. In fact, he even treats "unsavable" sinners with dignity and respect. Look at Judas. He covered for him, so that when Judas went out to betray his Lord, the disciples thought he went out to make an offering to feed the poor. {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)

"Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not reckon his sin." Now who is God willing to treat like that? To whom is God willing to say, "I'll never raise up your past again; don't worry about it. I'm not worried about it. I want to treat you as my Son. I want to treat you as if you've been loyal all your life, as loyal as Jesus my Son."

God says all these things to encourage us not to worry about our sinful past. What do we have to do to realize that God wants to treat us like that? Isn't it just to trust him? To trust him that he is forgiveness personified.

When that righteousness of Christ is "reckoned to us," it's not some kind of book balancing thing. It's God trying to find ways to explain to us how he's willing to treat us—as if we had never left his side at all, as if we had always been there as trusting children. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 4, recorded October 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*
<http://pkp.cc/7MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/8MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

Recommended Listening:

The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel's Messages is available at:
<http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 "God's Last Pleading with His Children" is available at:
<http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—"God's Last Pleading with His Children"

Further Study with Ellen White

Evil originated with Lucifer, who rebelled against the government of God. Before his fall he was a covering cherub, distinguished by his excellence. God made him good and beautiful, as near as possible like Himself (RH Sept. 24, 1901). {4BC 1163.1}

The teaching of this parable [of the sower] 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 him. 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. {UL 77.5}

Through long ages God has borne the anguish of beholding the work of evil. He has given the infinite Gift of Calvary, rather than let any be deceived by the misrepresentations of the wicked one, for the tares could not be plucked up without danger of uprooting the precious grain. {UL 77.6}

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}

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}

In the very fact that men are free moral agents, God teaches us not to be forced or compelled into any course of action, also that as responsible beings in copartnership with God we are to represent God in character. We are to have an interest in our brother, in our neighbor, in all around (Letter 65, 1895). {5BC 1098.1}

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. {MB 142.1}

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 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}

I saw that the angels of God are never to control the will. God sets before man life and death. He can have his choice. {EW 221.1}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan’s control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. “The truth shall make you free;” and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one’s self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is “the law of liberty.” James 2:12. {DA 466.5}

God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve. {PK 510.4}

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. {5BC 1131.1}

When one surrenders to Christ, the mind is brought under the control of the law; but it is the royal law, which proclaims liberty to every captive. By becoming one with Christ, man is made free. Subjection to the will of Christ means restoration to perfect manhood. {MH 131.1}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence 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. Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will. {5T 738.1}

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}

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. Then the prevarications and accusations of him who had once been an exalted angel were seen in their true light. It was seen that his professedly spotless character was deceptive. His deeply laid scheme to exalt himself to supremacy was fully discerned. His falsehoods were apparent to all. God's authority was forever established. Truth triumphed over falsehood. {RC 60.3}

The heavenly universe had witnessed the weapons that were chosen by the Prince of life—the words of Scripture, "It is written"; and the weapons used by the prince of the world—falsehood and deception. They had seen the Prince of life deal in straightforward lines of truth, honesty, and integrity, while the prince of the world exercised his power of cunning, artful secrecy, intrigue, enmity, and revenge. They had seen the One who bore the banner of truth sacrifice everything, even His life, to maintain truth, while the one who bore the banner of rebellion continued to strengthen his accusations against the God of truth. {RC 60.5}

All who will can be overcomers. Let us strive earnestly to reach the standard set before us. Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day (MS 28, 1886). {7BC 974.3}

The rabbis had a saying that there is rejoicing in heaven when one who has sinned against God is destroyed; but Jesus taught that to God the work of destruction is a strange work. That in which all heaven delights is the restoration of God's own image in the souls whom He has made. {COL 190.1}

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble; and every soul that was decided on the truth and was pure in heart was to be covered with the covering of the Almighty. {EW 43.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 2 “A Moment of Destiny”

Read for this week’s study

Matthew 24:14; Revelation 14:14—20; Matthew 16:27; Acts 1:9—11; Mark 4:26—29; Revelation 16:1.

Memory Text

“Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, ‘Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe’ ” (Revelation 14:14, 15, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Eternal Choices
- III. The Son of Man Returns
- IV. The Heavenly Judgment
- V. The Victor’s Crown
- VI. Every Seed Produces a Harvest
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Revelation 14:14-15. Should the following items in this text be taken literally or figuratively: A white cloud, a golden crown, a sharp sickle, the temple, reaping the harvest of the earth? How does one decide when such an item should be taken literally or figuratively? How does Revelation 1:1 inform one’s response to this question? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Revelation 14:6 in light of Matthew 24:14. Both texts suggest that the gospel will go to the whole world in the final generation of earth’s history. How can this possibly happen in such a fragmented world as we live in today? Three times in Revelation (20:7, 12, 20) Jesus says, “I am coming quickly”. How are we to

understand these words in light of the many centuries that have transpired since? (Sunday's Lesson)

3. Read Revelation 14:14. What title does John use for Jesus in this verse? Why do you think John uses this title in the context of the Second Coming? What do we learn about the Son of Man in the context of the Second Coming from Matthew 16:27, 24:27, 30, and 25:31-32? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Revelation 14:14 and Acts 1:9-11. What similarities do you find between the two texts? Read Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14. From Daniel's perspective, who is this "son of man"? Why would New Testament writers consider this "son of man" to be Jesus? In what way is having a "son of man" in the judgment good news for the human race? What impact does this have on our understanding of God's character? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Compare Revelation 14:15 and Mark 4:26-29. What similarities do you see between these texts? Should we take the ripening here literally or figuratively? What relationship might this theme have with Ephesians 4:13-16? How do you understand Ellen White's statement, "At every stage of development our life may be perfect"? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Revelation 14:17-20. How should we understand the word "ripening" in the context of the unrighteous? How is Ellen White's statement relevant to this: "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 is it allowed to dwell." GC 555. How are we to understand the wrath of God in Scripture? How do you discern the difference between good and evil? Why is this kind of discernment important? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. What is the relationship between being saved by grace and growing in grace? (Friday's Lesson)
8. What are the elements necessary for the growth of plants? What analogies do you see for our understanding of spiritual growth? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The remaining question is how does one grow up like this? How does one become perfect and mature? You remember in the earlier verses that we are saved, we are healed by faith. And faith, we've discussed so many times in these conversations, faith means trust. It means love. It means admiration. And that means a willingness to listen. It is a law in this orderly universe as God has designed it, that we will inevitably become like the person we worship and admire. We know that from experience. We also see it corroborated and confirmed in Scripture in so many places. Look at 2 Corinthians 3:18, next on the list:

Then with unveiled faces we can all behold as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. And we become changed into His likeness, from glory to glory, through the Spirit of the Lord working in us. *Norlie*

This is how the Spirit works. He brings us the truth. He brings us the picture of God. He brings us all the evidence of Scripture. We look at the picture. We like what we see and we're changed.

Now, it works in the other direction just as well. Look at Psalm 115:8 about those who worship idols: "Those who make them, [the idols,] will be like them, and so will all who trust in them" (NIV). It is inevitable that we will become like the person or the object we worship and admire. If we regard God as arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe, we too will become the same. History has borne out the truth of that, hasn't it? Think of the cruelty of many people who have claimed to worship God, but having the devil's picture of God, have been incredibly cruel in their treatment of other people, even as Paul was before the Damascus road.

But if we see God as He really is and as His Son proved Him to be, and all the testimony of Scripture, and if we like what we see, we admire what we see, and we even worship the One we see, then it is a law that we will become like Him. How absolutely essential then that we have a true picture of our God. The hazard of a false picture, if we prefer it, is that we will become like that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #14, "God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done" 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/14MMCAG>

Lou: You've talked of Jesus as our example in this series on conversations about God. We've had several questions come in raising the question about His perhaps having an advantage over us. How could He be regarded as our example if He did have such an advantage? Would you comment briefly on that one?

Graham: Well, I'll cite Paul for that. He said, "Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh to deal with sin." I think really what's behind this is, can we really look to Jesus as an example of the perfection that we should have?

Lou: Yes, I think that's right.

Graham: But was He exactly like us? There are some interesting differences. He was born of the Holy Spirit. And I might be sixty-five before I'm born of the Holy Spirit. So when I'm reborn, I've got sixty-five years of bad habits to fight with for the rest of my life. Jesus never acquired a bad habit. The only way you can get a bad habit is to do something bad, which He never did. And you say, "Well, then He's not an example for me." How low do we want Him to go? Do we want Him to wallow in the gutter as a wino, so that He can be an example as to how you can get out

of the gutter? I don't want Jesus to be more and more like me. I want to be more and more like Him. So He came in human form in the likeness of sinful flesh using no power that is not available to us. And He showed that even little boys can be good. And you can grow up good like that.

And you say, "Well, I had bad habits."

"Look," He says, "I'm your Physician; I understand. I'll be very patient. And I guarantee I'll help you get over all of those things. Just trust Me."

So how many things do we want Him to do more than He did? He's enough of an example to show how we could have lived. Well, we didn't. What will He do with us now? He's the Physician, and He knows exactly what it's like to go through what we are going through. And so you can count on Him to be patient. You say, "Well, I guess that means the Father isn't just as patient." No, Jesus came to show how patient the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are. I think sometimes we run into problems when we raise the wrong questions about what He came to tell us, what He came to show us. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #14 with Lou Venden, "God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done" 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/14MMCAG>

Someone came between because of the emergency. It's not ideal. God would like to deal directly with us, face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. But because we don't know God, and we've been afraid, God has given us these pictures. He's given us a picture even of Jesus being our judge. Doesn't Jesus deal with this? He says, "You're all comforted that I'm going to be your judge. Because you were scared my Father was going to judge you, isn't that right?" They said, "Oh, we're so relieved you're going to be our judge." Is that because the Father is not as gracious and forgiving as the Son, that we say we're glad the Son's going to be our judge? So before he went back to heaven, he said, "I've got to clear that up, too. Actually, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. You'd receive just as gracious judgment from my Father as from me. But I'd like to take you a step further. I'm not going to judge you anyway." "Oh, there'll be something that will judge you. The truth will judge you. The truth about my Father in the Great Controversy. The truth about the kind of person he is and what he wants of his children, and the way he governs the universe. That's the truth. If you have loved that truth and it has led you to repentance and faith and trust, you will have stood humbly in our presence and said, 'What must I do to be saved and healed?' and we will have been able to save and heal you, and all will be well. But if you have turned down this truth about my Father and about me, you will not know us; you will not be our friends; you will not trust us enough to listen. We will not be able to heal you; and you will perish and we will cry." And that's the judgment. {Graham Maxwell.

Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Leviticus, recorded October 1981, 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/5MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/6MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: People want to know about perfection.

Graham: Well, fortunately we have two hours coming up. We have a whole evening entitled, “God can perfectly heal the damage done or completely heal the damage done.” I think it’s that important, because a misunderstanding of perfection is a heavy burden and puts God in a very bad light. Now, I believe God can perfectly heal the damage done. No question about it. And perfection also needs to be understood as maturity and growing up, the need to be so settled into the truth and grown up in the truth that we can survive the time of trouble. But as for not making mistakes—a mistake is not a sin. And I think it’s so important to be relieved of that. In the hereafter, you could plant your pomegranate tree too close to where you are living, and the Lord come by later and say, “You know, you put it too close, didn’t you. You might as well move it.” That is not a sin. Sin is rebelliousness. Sin is distrust. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4 with Lou Venden, “God’s Way of Restoring Trust” 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/4MMCAG>

If God is not going to allow the closing events to occur until He has a generation like Job, mature enough and settled into the truth to pass through the “time of trouble,” thoughts that pass through my mind in that connection are this: I think we have assumed it takes a very, very long time to grow up from rebirth to maturity. I notice that when Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he suggested that they could be grown up much sooner.

And in Hebrews, it was just a few years later that he said, “By now you should be teachers, but I see you are still babes in the truth.” I think that we could encourage people to believe they could grow up from rebirth to maturity much sooner, and it would be much more exciting. You know, when we’re baptized, we think, “I’ve launched myself on sixty-five years of slow sanctification.” I think, “No, why not grow up without delay as quickly as possible and be settled into the truth?” But then when we have an absolutely out-of-sight, forbidding conception of perfection, we think “Well, I’m not going to make it anyway.”

The conception of perfection we find in the Bible is the conception of an individual who is so convinced of this truth about God, that if Satan should come as an angel of light, even as Christ, and say God is arbitrary, vengeful, unforgiving and severe, a twelve-year-old might be able to

say, “That’s not true and I will not believe it.” So I think we have made the difference too extended in there, and God can, under the accelerating, energizing events of the close of time, He can produce a generation of grown-up Jobs of all ages. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, “God’s Way of Restoring Trust” 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/4MMCAG>

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel’s Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 “God’s Last Pleading with His Children” is available at: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—“God’s Last Pleading with His Children”

Further Study with Ellen White

The truth will have the same molding influence upon hearts whatever the nationalities. Every human heart that accepts the truth will bow to the majesty of its sway, and when Christ is abiding in the heart by faith they will be of one mind, for Christ is not divided. They will be strong in His strength, happy and united in His peace. The truth is the same in its subduing power upon all hearts. It will refine and ennoble the heart of the receiver. {OHC 171.5}

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}

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}

The opinion is held by many that God placed a separating wall between the Hebrews and the outside world; that His care and love, withdrawn to a great extent from the rest of mankind, were centered upon Israel. But 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}

While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God. {DA 173.1}

It is impossible for finite minds to comprehend the work of redemption. Its mystery exceeds human knowledge; yet he who passes from death to life realizes that it is a divine reality. The beginning of redemption we may know here through a personal experience. Its results reach through the eternal ages. {DA 173.2}

Christ said, “It is expedient for you that I go away.” No one could then have any preference because of his location or personal contact with Christ. The Saviour would be accessible to all alike, spiritually, and in this sense He would be nearer to us all than if He had not ascended on high. Now all may be equally favored by beholding Him and reflecting His character. The eye of faith sees Him ever present, in all His goodness, grace, forbearance, courtesy, and love. . . . And as we behold, we are changed into His likeness. {HP 337.2}

Such transformation of character as is seen in the life of John is ever the result of communion with Christ. There may be marked defects in the character of an individual, yet when he becomes a true disciple of Christ, the power of divine grace transforms and sanctifies him. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed from glory to glory, until he is like Him whom he adores. {AA 559.1}

He who places himself unreservedly under the guidance of the Spirit of God will find that his mind expands and develops. He obtains an education in the service of God which is not one-

sided and deficient, developing a one-sided character, but one which results in symmetry and completeness. {ST, January 2, 1907 par. 6}

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}

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of the Saviour shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim His own. It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten, the coming of our Lord. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel! Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come. {CT 324.3}

Thus will be fulfilled Christ's promise to His disciples, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." John 14:3. Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honor and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying to them, Your warfare is accomplished. "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34. {AA 34.1}

To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and a familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and the glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts.... {SD 360.3}

As the representative of God, Christ appeared in human flesh. Though in the form of a man, He was the Son of God, and the world was given an opportunity to see how it would treat God. Christ declared, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). But when He comes the second time, divinity is no longer concealed. He comes as One equal with God, as His own beloved Son, Prince of heaven and earth. He is also the Redeemer of His people, the Life-giver. The glory of the Father and the Son are seen to be one. . . . Then shall He shine forth "before his ancients gloriously" (Isaiah 24:23). {HP 357.4}

Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ's advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. . . . This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known—witnessed by the whole world. {GC 625.2}

The angels of heaven are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. We know not now who they are; it is not yet made manifest who shall overcome, and share the inheritance of the saints in light; but angels of heaven are passing throughout the length and breadth of the earth, seeking to comfort the sorrowing, to protect the imperiled, to win the hearts of men to Christ. Not one is neglected or passed by. God is no respecter of persons, and He has an equal care for all the souls He has created. {DA 639.1}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the "Son of man" who shares the throne of the universe. It is the "Son of man" whose name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love. {DA 25.3}

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. {DA 26.2}

The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died,—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, "and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." And

through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift,—*Immanuel*, “*God with us.*” {DA 26.3}

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}

By the life and the death of Christ, the thoughts of men also are brought to view. From the manger to the cross, the life of Jesus was a call to self-surrender, and to fellowship in suffering. It unveiled the purposes of men. Jesus came with the truth of heaven, and all who were listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit were drawn to Him. The worshipers of self belonged to Satan’s kingdom. In their attitude toward Christ, all would show on which side they stood. And thus everyone passes judgment on himself. {DA 57.3}

Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.—SC 11 (1892). {1MCP 250.1}

We have now come to the last days of the work of the third angel’s message, when Satan will work with increasing power because he knows that his time is short. At the same time there will come to us through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, diversities of operations in the outpouring of the Spirit. This is the time of the latter rain.—Letter 230, 1908. {3SM 83.2}

Christ came to the world that we might become new creatures, created after the similitude of his own character; that we might have purity like the purity of God, have perfection like his perfection. In the work of regeneration, the original loveliness begins to be restored. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted to the soul, and the image of the divine begins to shine forth. “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” It is plainly declared that a change takes place in the character of the human agent. {ST, August 21, 1893 par. 3}

To human beings, striving for conformity to the divine image, there is imparted an outlay of heaven’s treasure, an excellency of power that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen. {HP 148.5}

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. {COL 333.1}

The study of God's word is continually expanding the mind and strengthening the intellect. There is nothing that will so refine and elevate the character, and give vigor to every faculty, as the continual exercise of the mind to grasp and comprehend weighty and important truths. {4T 545.3}

The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." {DA 302.1}

God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. . . . Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. {DA 251.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 3 “The Everlasting Gospel”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 14:6–12; 1 Corinthians 15:1–4; Romans 3:24–26; 1 Peter 1:18–20; Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8.

Memory Text

“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Grace-filled Book of Hope
- III. The “Everlasting” Gospel
- IV. A Story of Grace
- V. Into All the World
- VI. A Mission Movement
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Revelation 14:6. A major evangelical scholar makes the case that this is not an invitation to accept the gospel but a proclamation of doom on those who oppose it. Among other things, he notes that the three angels of Revelation 14:6-12 have many similarities with the three woes of 8:13. The recipients of this gospel are the same group of people that approves of the beast in Revelation 13:7. Further evidence is that the other two angels bring messages of doom, so why should not this message also be a message of doom? But such a reading would undermine a core emphasis of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, that this text represents the final proclamation of the gospel to the world. What evidence can you point to in the text that would suggest the everlasting gospel in this text should be seen as a positive invitation to the world to accept Christ? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)

2. Read Revelation 14:6 in light of Revelation 1:1-3. What implications does Revelation's origin story (1:1-3) have for our understanding of the everlasting gospel in 14:6? Read Revelation 1:4-6. In plain language, what does this passage say about the basic theme of the book of Revelation? What implications does this have for how we understand the beasts of Revelation? (Sunday's Lesson)
3. According to 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, what is the gospel? In what way does the death and resurrection of Christ make all the difference? What does Paul add about the gospel in Romans 3:24-26 and 5:6-8? How would the following texts help us understand the "everlasting" aspect of the gospel (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; Ephesians 1:4)? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Revelation 13:8 and 1 Peter 1:18-20. What do these verses teach about the plan of salvation? What does Ephesians 1:4 add to the first two passages? How should this text impact our personal appropriation of the gospel? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Note the wide extent of the everlasting gospel in Revelation 14:6. How can such a world-wide mission be accomplished in today's world? What does the message of Matthew 28:18-20 add to Revelation 14:6? How does it emphasize the personal side of this worldwide "proclamation"? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. What do Revelation 14:6, Acts 1:8 and Matthew 24:14 all have in common? How will we know when every corner of the earth has been reached with the message of the gospel? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. Ellen White wrote that the message of the third angel is justification by faith. RH April 1, 1890. How do you get that idea out of a proclamation like 14:9-11? (Friday's Lesson)
8. How can a local church or even a class like Pine Knoll play a larger role in the final proclamation of the gospel to the world? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

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.

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>

Lou: Now, last week when we were talking about the Three Angels' Messages, I think you spent about ninety per cent of the time just talking about the "good news" part. And I was wondering, shouldn't we have divided the time equally between all three? Why such an overemphasis upon that first one?

Graham: I think there's a great message there. I think we need to know the everlasting good news before we even look at the other two. You've got to know the truth about our God before you can understand the opposition, before you can understand the awful consequence. The truth is our protection there. And I believe we should go to the world, always, with the three angels' messages and always start with number one. Never start with number three.

Lou: And understand the other two in the light of number one.

Graham: In the light of number one. So ninety per cent—number one. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #17 with Lou Venden, "Satan's Final Effort to Deceive" 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/17MMCAG>

In the narrower view that is preoccupied with our salvation (though the proponents of that view think that it is God-centered) I take the view that it is very man centered. It is all the time, what he's done for us, how we look, and so forth. Whereas in the other view the gospel is the good news about God. Everything depends on the kind of person he is. {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)

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>

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel’s Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 “God’s Last Pleading with His Children” is available at:

<http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—“God’s Last Pleading with His Children”

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1076.2}

In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace—in “the beauty of the Lord our God” (Psalm 90:17). {AG 223.3}

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we have received them. It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1. {SC 51.3}

It is no part of Christ’s mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, who seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederated with evil angels sometimes bring suffering upon their fellow men in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. {AA 541.1}

God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith. {MB 76.3}

God never forces the will or the conscience, but Satan's constant resort—to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise seduce—is compulsion by cruelty. Through fear or force he endeavors to rule the conscience and to secure homage to himself.—GC 591 (1888). {1MCP 325.1}

All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {DA 827.3}

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. {SD 23.2}

It is our privilege to have a calm, close, happy walk with Jesus every day we live. {TMK 320.4}

To us also the promise of Christ's abiding presence is given. The lapse of time has wrought no change in His parting promise. He is with us today as truly as He was with the disciplines, and He will be with us "even unto the end." {8T 17.1}

All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {DA 827.3}

The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. {DA 805.3}

As a Satanic power is stirring up the elements from beneath, God will send light and power to His people, that the message of truth may be proclaimed to all the world. {Mar 189.5}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 4 “Fear God *and* Give Glory to Him”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 14; Genesis 22:12; Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; Colossians 3:1, 2; Hebrews 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.

Memory Text

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Fear God
- III. Fearing and Obeying God
- IV. Living a God-centered Life
- V. Giving Glory to God
- VI. Revelation’s Overcomers
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read 2 Peter 3:10. Is the end of the world more or less believable than it was a couple hundred years ago? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Revelation 14:7. “Fear God” must be very important, since the phrase constitutes the first words out of the first angel’s mouth. The English word “fear” generally means something along the lines of terror. But the Greek and Hebrew words for fear have a broader meaning. What is the first angel calling on people to do? How does Hebrew poetry elaborate on the meaning of fearing the Lord (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 3:7; 9:10)? What implications might this have for us? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Deuteronomy 6:2 and Ecclesiastes 12:13-14. What do these texts reveal about the fear of God? How do you relate what these texts say about the fear of the Lord with Proverbs 9:10? In light of everything we have learned about the fear of God from the above texts, what do we do with Matthew 10:28? (Monday’s Lesson)

4. The author of the lesson suggests that a good way to describe the fear of God in more contemporary terms is “living a God-centered life”? Do you agree with that definition? What do Matthew 6:33, Colossians 3:1-2, and Hebrews 12:1-2 tell us about making God the true center of our lives? What does that mean in practical terms? Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. How relevant is this to the end-time battle language associated with the battle of Armageddon in the book of Revelation 16:14-16? How relevant is Philippians 4:8 to this question and what do you do with Paul’s advice in today’s troubled world? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
5. What is the second major command or exhortation in Revelation 14:7? How do 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20, and 10:31 help us understand the meaning of glorifying God? What additional insight is added in Joshua 7:9 and 1 Samuel 6:5? How relevant to the subject is Romans 12:1-2? What is the difference between glorifying God and intelligent worship? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
6. Revelation 14:12 tells us that the end-time saints have the faith of Jesus? What does the “faith of Jesus” mean, and how does that relate to verse 7? Read Hebrews 4:14-16 and 7:25. What relevance does the intercession of Jesus mentioned here have to the call to “fear God and give him glory”? (Thursday’s Lesson)
7. The language of “fear God and give him glory” is rather foreign in today’s world. If you could write the script for the first angel, how would you express in contemporary terms what the first angel indicates will be the final message to the world? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Other things that the services would say to the people, and we discussed this last time, certainly to conduct the sacrifices and the services as described in detail would suggest holiness as we approach God—purity, modesty, reverence. But evidently this was not enough, because we have the story of Nadab and Abihu who staggered drunk into the tabernacle to try out some new incense in the presence of God. And God took their act of irreverence very seriously. For, as we have discussed before, reverence for God is the beginning of wisdom. If there is no respect in the classroom, nothing happens that’s good. That’s why it is so difficult to have freedom in the classroom and yet all due respect. How to achieve that balance, I think that’s the most difficult thing God has sought to accomplish, how to have reverence without fear!

When there’s irreverence, he can’t even tell people he doesn’t want them to be afraid. So when Nadab and Abihu behaved so grossly, God acted with terrible majesty and power, and the people were, I’m sure, duly impressed, but mixed with fear. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Leviticus*, recorded October 1981, 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/5MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/6MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

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, but 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. Maybe you slept through Gethsemane, Peter and James. Then please come to Calvary and watch.” Peter and James had fled. John came, fortunately, and has the most to say about it. On Calvary, Jesus was tortured to death. By whom? The most devout group of blueprinting Adventists the world has ever known. Absolutely dedicated to God, the scriptures, creation, the 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 said he had a devil to be describing God the way he was. 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 believe 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 the Jews did, and become his enemies. {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)

As you understand Hebrew parallelism, and when we get into more poetry we should think of that a little more, the second line may emphasize or enlarge the point made in the first line, which means that “to obey” means particularly “to hearken,” and vice versa, as, I believe you

pointed out in the Shemah it's not just "listen," it's "hearken," which is an attentive kind of listening, with an intent to do what you're asked to do.

Now, what's so significant is that if you carry that over into the New Testament, in the Greek, the Greek word for "obedience" is literally "a willingness to listen", to "hearken." God asks of us an unreserved willingness to listen. He does not expect perfect performance. He knows better than that. But if he gets less than a totally committed willingness to listen or hearken, nothing good's going to happen. If we only listen part time, if we cooperate part time and cheat the rest, nothing good can happen. It's not too much of God to ask our total willingness to listen, and to hearken. That's the real meaning of obedience. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Ruth, 1 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/13MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Rote, mechanical, legalistic, unthinking obedience implies a rote, mechanical, unthinking, legalistic, arbitrary God. And those who God chose to be his spokesmen to the world turned out to be the most serious perverters of the truth. To the extent that, when Christ came to set them right and give them a correct picture of God, it was his family, his Sabbath-keeping saints in the Promised Land, who killed him rather than accept the truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Galatians, #3, recorded February 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*
<http://pkp.cc/3MMGALATIANS66>

Could you say, "I do what I do as a Christian because I'm finding the longer I live the more it is right and sensible to do so. And I'm seeing that more, the longer I live. And I have great and increasing admiration and respect for the one who so commanded me, in the days of my ignorance and immaturity, when the only reason why I did those good things or avoided those bad things was that he told me to. And he had the power to reward and destroy. Or I loved him and wanted to please him. At least it protected me. But I've come to the place now where I'm more and more beginning to do what's right because it is right. And I haven't had to think, 'There's a command not to murder my mother-in-law,' for a whole year. And my mother-in-law has never been so safe!" You see, if you have to check the Ten Commandments every morning not to murder your mother-in-law, your mother-in-law is walking on thin ice all the time. I think because God loves mothers-in-law, and knows our tendencies, he had to say, "Thou shalt not murder thy mother-in-law." Shame on us that we required that!

What an awful moment in God's family, when he had to gather his children around and say, "I want all the murdering and the hating to stop. And I want all the stealing, and the cheating, and the lying, and the immorality to stop. Please!" That means it was going on. There was a day when God didn't have to do that, and there's a day coming when he won't have to do it again. You remember the new covenant? It will all be written in our hearts, and we will do what is right because it is right. God will not have to lecture us a million years down the line and say, "I want all the murdering up here in heaven to stop." We won't have hated a soul for a million years. We'll be doing what's right because it is right.

Now if you heard your children behind the door saying, "Let's do what our folks want. I mean, you'll have to admit that everything they've asked us to do makes such good sense, we ought to want to do it anyway." And you get the impression that even after you're dead and gone, your children will go on doing what's right because it is right. Because now they're maturing, and they've come to see. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Galatians*, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>

In the introduction to his letter to the believers in Rome, Paul states his conviction that he had been specially commissioned to bring about a new kind of obedience. It was to be different from the kind of obedience he himself had offered before he met Jesus on the Damascus road. It was to be what he calls literally "obedience of faith," "obedience of trust."

"Law-obedience" is what Paul used to practice with such zeal, and he was not at all pleased with the results. It had made him intolerant toward other people, even cruel. "Law-obedience" had actually led him to violate the whole spirit of God's law, the law of love.

By now urging "faith-obedience" or "trust-obedience," is Paul doing away with the law? "By no means!" Paul exclaims. "On the contrary, we uphold the law." (Romans 3:31, NRSV) Phillips interprets, "We put the Law in its proper place."

One proper place for the law has been to serve as "our attendant on the way to Christ." But the ultimate place is the one Jeremiah described. Paul agrees with the prophet. What the law requires may be written on the heart—the place, Paul explains to the Romans, where the conscience is active and people do their thinking. (See Romans 2:15)

"Trust-obedience" is the kind that results from "knowing" God, in the full meaning of that word. It comes from learning the truth about him and his use of law. It is the result of being won back to trust him as a Friend, to admire him for his wise and gracious ways.

This means that the Spirit of Truth has succeeded in writing the law "on our hearts." Now we freely do what the law requires, not because we've been ordered to, but because we're

convinced in our own minds that what the law requires is right. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 103-104. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter8.html>

But if the Bible is a record of God's revelation of himself in many and various ways, and one of his ways is through the people who so loved and admired him that they imitated him and became like him. That doesn't sound like Paul before Damascus road. Look at him now. He's so tender of heart and gracious. Wonderful things had happened to Paul. And I think that fits in very well. In fact, I think things like this are among the most important parts of scripture.

"Jesus wept." Think what that says about God. God attended the funeral of one of his friends, and the Bible says that he cried. And when he raised Jairus' daughter, he says, "Wait a minute, everybody. This little girl is hungry, and somebody get something for her to eat." That's theology! Why do we put other things above it? See, that's "Let this mind be in you which is in Christ Jesus, who said 'This little girl is hungry. Get her something to eat.'" And he cried at a funeral. That's the mind of Christ. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Philippians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/69MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/70MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

How you define faith and trust enters into this. And we need to read other places. **To me, faith is just a word we use to describe a relationship with God as with a person well known; and we get to know him through the gospel. The good news is about God, that he is infinitely worthy of our trust. It implies an attitude toward God of love, and trust, and deepest admiration.** It means having enough confidence in God, based upon the more than adequate evidence, all summed up in the good news, to be willing to believe what God says—as soon as we're sure *he* said it! And to accept what God offers, as soon as we're sure *he's* offering it, and to do whatever God wishes, without reservation, as soon as we're sure *he's* asking us, and not somebody else. Anybody who has such a trusting relationship with God, of love, trust, and admiration, willing to listen, is perfectly safe to save. He could die just beginning that relationship, like the thief on the cross. He would arise loving, trusting, and admiring that kind one in the middle. He will be willing to listen and accept all kinds of instruction and correction. He is therefore safe to save. But you can't regard God in that attitude without a new heart and a right spirit. So you are a new creature, which he's going to mention in a moment.

And that's what David eventually wanted—truth and honesty in the inner man. Mention honesty, and you remember Micah, Amos, Hosea, they all talked about this. All God asks of us is

that we stand humbly in his presence with an honest willingness to listen, and let him do for us whatever needs to be done.

I would add that even though with the passing of time I'm finding more and more that everything God has asked us to do makes such good sense and I agree with him. I would have to say that being still somewhat ignorant and immature, I'm willing to obey this trustworthy God when he instructs me to do something beyond my present understanding.

Wouldn't that be safe? Because he's proved always to make such good sense in every other respect. And I think that's what Abraham said to him. "God, you've always made such good sense. But your command to sacrifice the son of the promise makes no sense to me. But I know it will. So God, I'm on my way." I believe faith says to God, "God, I hear you, and I've checked that carefully. It is you. And I am on my way. But as I go, in all reverence, may I ask why?"

"And that's how we come to know God. And for three days and three nights Abraham thought that through; and in the end he said, "God, I'm even beginning to think of ways in which you could work this out. I'm not telling you how, but I know you will, because you'll not contradict yourself in the promise you gave me about my son. Maybe you'll resurrect my son. Just as you gave him miraculously, you could easily resurrect him. Or maybe you'll provide a substitute." And that's what God chose to do. And Abraham is cited in Hebrews 11 as one who trusted God, but thought it through. **Faith is not blind. You can jump off a cliff if you take leaps in the dark, and call that faith. It is not safe. History is strewn with the wreckage of people who leap in the dark and call it faith. Light makes faith possible, and without it we ought to wait.** {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Galatians, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>*

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel's Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 "God's Last Pleading with His Children" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—"God's Last Pleading with His Children"

Further Study with Ellen White

To give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own, and thus make Him known. And in whatever way we make known the Father or the Son, we glorify God (MS 16, 1890).

{7BC 979.4}

The reason why it seems so difficult to win souls for Christ, is that Satan is continually engaged in misrepresenting the character of God to the human mind. Christ came to reveal the Father to the world in his true character, that the false conceptions which men entertained of the divine character might be swept away. {RH, May 31, 1892 par. 9}

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}

Jesus said: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." All that was done and said had this one object in view,—to rivet truth in their minds that they might attain unto everlasting life. Jesus did not come to astonish men with some great announcement of some special time when some great event would occur, but he came to instruct and save the lost. {RH, March 22, 1892 par. 5}

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}

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}

The law of God existed before man was created. It was adapted to the condition of holy beings; even angels were governed by it. After the fall, the principles of righteousness were unchanged. Nothing was taken from the law; not one of its holy precepts could be improved. And as it has existed from the beginning, so will it continue to exist throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. “Concerning thy testimonies,” says the psalmist, “I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever (ST April 15, 1886). {1BC 1104.2}

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}

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us. {DA 668.3}

If the human agent consents, God can and will so identify His will with all our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His Word, that when obeying His will, we are only carrying out the impulses of our minds. {UL 187.5}

Satan is constantly urging men to accept his principles. Thus he seeks to counterwork the work of God. He is constantly representing the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power he is constantly using against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan’s charges by showing the result of obedience to right principles. {6T 11.2}

But when we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure. {COL 363.1}

When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service and he makes up for the deficiency with his own divine merit; for he is the source of every right impulse. {OW, December 1, 1909 par. 10}

But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience. {SC 60.2}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP 34.3}

In calling them to His service, God offers them freedom. Obedience to God is liberty from the thralldom of sin, deliverance from human passion and impulse. {TM 247.1}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. {GC 465.1}

Heaven's law is always merciful, kind, tender, helpful, uplifting to others. {FLB 84.4}

He would have us living in the world, yet not of it, our affections taking hold of eternal things. He would have us talking of the things which He has prepared for those that love Him. This will attract our minds, awaken our hopes and expectations, and strengthen our souls to endure the conflicts and trials of this life. As we dwell on these scenes the Lord will encourage our faith and

confidence. He will draw aside the veil and give us glimpses of the saints' inheritance. {3SM 163.5}

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation. {1SM 364.1}

Our divine Lord is equal to any emergency . . . Cast yourself wholly on His mercy. There is no difficulty within or without that cannot be surmounted in His strength. {HP 17.3}

By beholding Jesus we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from character to character. He conforms to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ makes an end of the curse of sin, and sets the believing soul free from its action and effect. {1SM 395.1}

The power of truth is to transform heart and character. Its effect is not like a dash of color here and there upon the canvas; the whole character is to be transformed, the image of Christ is to be revealed in words and actions. A new nature is imparted. . . . {6BC 1117.15}

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}

From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. {FLB 191.2}

Amid the perplexities that will press upon the soul, there is only One who can help us out of all our difficulties, and relieve all our disquietude. We are to cast all our care upon Jesus, and bear in mind that He is present, and is directing us to commune with Him. We are to keep our minds stayed upon God; and in our weakness, He will be our strength; in our ignorance, He will be our wisdom; in our frailty, He will be our enduring might. {SD 27.2}

Many hold faith as an opinion. But saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power. {GW 261.1}

Jesus does not call on us to follow Him, and then forsake us. If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. If in our ignorance we make missteps, Christ does not leave us. His voice, clear and distinct, is heard, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." [John 14:6.] "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper." [Psalm 72:12.] {GW 263.1}

In the whole Satanic force there is not power to overcome one soul who in simple trust casts himself on Christ. {COL 157.3}

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. {FE 179.3}

In the day of affliction, when the enemy presses us, we shall walk among the angels. They will be like a wall of fire about us; and we shall one day walk with them in the city of God. . . . {LHU 341.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 5 “The Good News of the Judgment”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 14:7; Psalm 51:1–4; Revelation 20:12; Daniel 7:9, 14, 26; Revelation 4:2–4; Revelation 5:1–12.

Memory Text

“Saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’ ”
(Revelation 14:7, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Significance of the Judgment Hour
- III. God’s Mercy and Judgment
- IV. A Magnificent Scene
- V. A Glimpse of Heaven
- VI. Jesus Is Worthy
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Revelation 14:7. Who is being judged in this text, God, the human race, or both? See also Romans 3:4. In response to this text the lesson states “God is a God of judgment.” What is judgment? How do you reconcile the Bible’s emphasis on judgment with a gracious God? What does judgment tell us about God? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Revelation 14:7 again. What does judgment have to do with the everlasting gospel (Rev 14:6)? How does judgment fit in to Revelation’s theme of a cosmic conflict over the character and government of God? In what form do you think the heavenly records are kept? Read Psalm 51:1-4. What implications does this text have for the judgment? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Read Revelation 20:12. What is the basis for the judgment? What do our actions reveal about us? In what way is justification by faith compatible with judgment according to works? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Daniel 7:9-13. What did Daniel see in these verses? According to the lesson, Revelation announces that the hour of judgment has come. The book of Daniel reveals when that judgment began. According to Daniel 7:26-27, what is the final result of this end-time judgment? According to Daniel 7, earthly kingdoms come and go, but God's kingdom is everlasting. What evidence do we have to trust in that assertion? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Revelation 4:2-4. What similarities do you find with the judgment scene of Daniel 7? What are some differences between the two accounts? Who are the 24 elders mentioned in Revelation 4? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Revelation 5:1-6. If this is a picture of judgment, who is being judged here? Read Revelation 5:7-12. How does all of heaven respond to the Lamb's taking up of the scroll? What does the scroll represent? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. How should the knowledge that we are living during the final judgment affect our daily lives? What about judgment is good news rather than bad news? (Friday's Lesson)
8. What does the concept of God's judgment teach us about the character of God? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: It's part of our problem, then, that we are taking models from our legal system here and trying to apply them to God.

Graham: That's a very good point, very much so.

Lou: The "substitutionary," that comes in, say more about that. The "vicarious."

Graham: Ah. He died in our stead. He died as the substitution. In a way, it's very true. I mean, either He dies or we die. However that's where the comparison ends, because if God has let you and me and all other sinners die, all it would have done is prove the truthfulness of His warning, "If you sin, you will die." And God could say to the universe, "Was I right? I said sinners would die, and look, they're dead." But the universe would not have had answers to questions two and three that I just mentioned. When Jesus died, there was no doubt in the minds of the universe that God was not killing His Son. They were clear about that. And the death of Christ answers all those three questions. So it's not either us or Him. His death was infinitely more significant than ours. But had He not died, then what else could God do but leave us to reap the

consequences and we all would have died. So in a sense, yes. He died in our stead, but beyond that there's no comparison.

Lou: But not as a payoff. It's not one or the other.

Graham: It's not His death is equal to all of ours. His death is infinitely more significant than the death of every sinful man or angel who has ever lived. The death of angels and men would not have answered the questions.

Lou: What you're saying then, is that just a simple satisfaction idea doesn't encompass what's involved at all, does it?

Graham: Oh, it makes it much too small. I think it puts God in a very bad light, and it doesn't answer the questions of the Great Controversy. Many folk who prefer those understandings of the plan of salvation do not understand there has been a universe-wide great controversy over the character and government of God. And do you remember at our first meeting, I brought along the evidence that even Luther, hero of the Christian world that he is, could not conceive of these larger issues because he couldn't include the book of Revelation—let alone Hebrews, James and Jude. And this has been the pattern through the years. Not many have seen the sixty-sixth book picture of a universe-wide controversy over the character and government of God. And so they have seen the death of Christ as primarily a plan just to save you and me, for which we are very grateful. It's just that the larger view makes the cross much more significant. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8 with Lou Venden, "The Most Costly and Convincing 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/8MMCAG>

Can you imagine a scene of several of us admitted into heaven over the Father's protest? And we're declaring, "But he just doesn't understand!" Well, we're destroying the whole structure of our happiness and security for eternity, if this is true. Jesus said I will not intercede with the Father for you. Why? He gives the reason. For the Father himself loves you, just as much as I do. That is, there's no need. And Goodspeed, in 1923, way back then, has a very venturesome rendering, which doesn't go beyond the Greek. "There is no need for me to intercede with the Father for you, for the Father loves you himself." Stunning. But think of the implications here. In the Bible we have intercession, priestly intercession, all the way along, don't we? Just as we have judgment pictures all the way along, and then Jesus says, "You know, I won't be your judge. The Father won't be your judge. The word will be your judge." Then why did you give us these other pictures? "It's what you needed, until I could tell you. There's nothing arbitrary in this. You'll be judged by whether or not you've responded to the truth and have been won back to faith." That's the judgment! {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of

God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

But “under the demands of law.” That belongs to a very legal conception of what has gone wrong in the universe, which we discussed in our second conversation. That what has gone wrong is that we have “broken the rules,” and the law demands that God execute us for breaking the rules. And Jesus died so that somehow God could justly forgive us even though we have broken the rules. I don’t think we have been able to make too much sense out of that. But it goes along with the other one, “satisfying justice.” Whose justice? I have friends who say, “If God does not give Idi Amin several days in the fire, I will not regard Him as a just God.” They have that feeling about the satisfaction of justice. And I think they really mean it, and I would respect them for that. I would love to relieve them of that burden. If I want to know why Jesus died, I should go right to the cross and watch Him die and hear His cry and see how the Father is involved, and then fit that back into Scripture. I don’t see Him fulfilling the requirements of a legal model. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, “The Most Costly and Convincing 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/8MMCAG>

There are some who say, “There is no need to reveal the righteousness of God. That’s a given. All we need are the methods and the steps He’s used to set us right.” But then they use the wrong methods. It’s by presenting the truth about God. “This is what God is like.”

And you use all sixty-six books for that. Look at all the evidence as to what God is like. Does he want to be served from fear? What does he do to his wayward children? We have to explain that. What about his wrath, and the destruction of the wicked? He has to explain that in order to win us back to trust, and the kind of obedience that God desires, that springs not from fear, or law, but from love, trust, and admiration. God’s way is to tell the truth about himself. But God has been judged as being untrue and unrighteous. And Paul says, “God, may you be shown to be right in what you have said and win your case when you take it into court.” “When Thou art judged” in the Greek can be translated “when you take it into court”.

Did anyone drag God into court? Or would he have to take his own case into court? If God’s in court, he took himself there. Nobody has power to drag him into court. So I love the translation “and win your case when you take it into court.” Has God won his case? Do you see the court, by the way? Daniel 7— A hundred million watch when the court sits in judgment and the books are opened. How about in Job? Is not God on trial there? Isn’t he accused of being

untrustworthy, in Job? Think of other places. The universe has been judging God. He has invited his children to examine and investigate his character and his government, for he has been accused. In the Garden of Eden he was accused. Think of other places. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Romans, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/61MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/62MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

The most important thing for us, though, as we read Daniel, what does it say about God that he would do this so publicly? A hundred million watching! Well, hasn't the Great Controversy been conducted in public? It's this very openness of God that wins to faith and trust. And he even allows the opposition to speak. Look how long he allowed his adversary to speak against him, personally. Think of the Infinite One allowing a finite creature to mount a great rebellion against him, and insinuate all these evil things about our God. He allowed it, because it's the only way to win to genuine trust.

You cannot use force, or the hiding of evidence. God doesn't have to blot out several minutes from the tape of the history of the universe to win his case. There's no cover-up here. It's all in public. God even says, "And I'll provide the books." Think of it! It's all out in open. And Satan accuses us before God. And Christ in his human form arises, and when Christ arises he does not excuse our sins. They're history. But then he does say, "But the devil thinks we're going to admit people to the Kingdom on the basis of these records of their sinful past. I'm not concerned about a man's sinful past. I'm only concerned about the kind of person he is now. Now if the devil wants to go back and cite all the sins of David that we've read through, he can present a lurid case against that friend of mine. But I would like to refer you to the fifty-first Psalm. In spite of those terrible things David did, in the end of his life he asked for a new heart and a right spirit, and I gave it to him. I'm not going to judge David on the record of his sinful past. As a matter of fact," Jesus could say, "that record that the devil wants to use, legalist that he is, is irrelevant, immaterial, and out of date. I want to tell you that David died with a new heart and a right spirit, and I recommend him as safe to save."

You imagine the devil making a case that Manasseh would not be safe to save. And Ellen White has him make a speech there that's most stirring, where he cites the sins that he's tempted people to commit, and then charges them against them, and says, "God, how can you save these people? Look at the sins that have marked their lives, behold the record here," he says. "Look at their unlikeness to Christ. Their malice, their hatred of one another. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them." He says, "God, are you going to save these, when you banish me and those who united with me from your presence? Have they not committed

the same sins?" And all this is true, you see. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Daniel, recorded February 1982, 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 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/39MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/40MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel's Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #9 "There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/9MMCAG>

Conversations About God #16 "God's Last Pleading with His Children" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 9—"There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God"

Conversations about God Chapter 16—"God's Last Pleading with His Children"

Further Study with Ellen White

God, the One infinite and all-wise, sees the end from the beginning, and in dealing with evil His plans were far-reaching and comprehensive. It was His purpose, not merely to put down the rebellion, but to demonstrate to all the universe the nature of the rebellion. God's plan was unfolding, showing both His justice and His mercy, and fully vindicating His wisdom and righteousness in His dealings with evil. {PP 78.3}

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 could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government, claiming that God was not just in imposing laws upon the angels; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was

seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. It was therefore necessary to demonstrate before the inhabitants of heaven, and of all the worlds, that God's government is just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper and his real object must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works. {PP 42.1}

The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore God permitted him to demonstrate the nature of his claims, to show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked. {PP 42.2}

Even when he was cast out of heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since only the service of love can be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of the worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted out of existence, some would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond all question. {PP 42.3}

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty. {PP 42.4}

The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the word of God: "Affliction shall not rise up the second time." Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved

creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom. {GC 504.1}

Each law of God is an enactment of mercy, love, and saving power. These laws, obeyed, are our life, our salvation, our happiness, our peace [Psalm 119:165 quoted] (Letter 112, 1902). {3BC 1153.6}

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above. But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace. Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled. {DA 37.2}

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God gave to human beings an unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. The gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart. It testifies that, having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. {9T 254.1}

The spirit of liberality is the spirit of heaven. Christ's self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. That man might be saved, He gave all that He had and then gave Himself. {9T 254.2}

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name, "—"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, "—" that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." 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. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-

sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which “seeketh not her own” has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19.2}

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}

It was a being of wonderful power and glory that had set himself against God. Of Lucifer the Lord says, “Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.” Ezekiel 28:12. Lucifer had been the covering cherub. He had stood in the light of God’s presence. He had been the highest of all created beings, and had been foremost in revealing God’s purposes to the universe. After he had sinned, his power to deceive was the more deceptive, and the unveiling of his character was the more difficult, because of the exalted position he had held with the Father. {DA 758.4}

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan’s government. The Lord’s principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God’s government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator. {SC 79.1}

Christ made full provision for the prosecution of the work entrusted to the disciples, and took upon Himself the responsibility of its success. So long as they obeyed His word, and worked in connection with Him, they could not fail. Go to all nations, He bade them. Go to the farthest part of the habitable globe, but know that My presence will be there. Labor in faith and confidence, for the time will never come when I will forsake you. {8T 16.3}

It was God’s purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God’s

principles. Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe. {DA 759.2}

Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man's uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all. {DA 759.3}

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. No one who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. It is true that Satan is a powerful being; but, thank God, we have a mighty Saviour, who cast out the evil one from heaven. {MH 94.3}

Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and claim the promises of God. Cherubim and seraphim and angels that excel in strength—ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands—stand at His right hand, "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Hebrews 1:14. {COL 176.3}

God has angels whose whole work is to draw those who shall be heirs of salvation. Whenever one takes a step toward Jesus, Jesus is taking steps toward him. The angels' work is to keep back the powers of Satan (MS 17, 1893). {7BC 922.5}

The angels of glory find their joy in . . . giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know. {ML 307.7}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 6 “The Hour of His Judgment”

Read for this week’s study

Daniel 8; Daniel 9; Ezra 7; Matthew 3:13–17; Romans 5:6–9; Mark 15:38; Leviticus 16:16.

Memory Text

“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand”
(Romans 13:11, 12, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Cleansing of the Sanctuary
- III. The 2,300 Days and the End Time
- IV. The Angel’s Instruction to Daniel
- V. The Messiah “Cut Off”
- VI. The Year 1844
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. According to the lesson, the angel of Revelation 14:7 announces that “the hour of His judgment has come.” And the book of Daniel gives us the time when this judgment begins. What implications for judgment do you find in Daniel 8:14? We are familiar with the literal sanctuaries of the Old Testament. But what does the “sanctuary” mean in New Testament terms? Read Daniel 8:27 and 9:21-22. What was Daniel’s response to the vision of the 2300 days, and what was God’s response to him? How is the death of Jesus (Dan 9:24-27) related to the judgment of Daniel 8:14? (Sunday’s Lesson)
2. Read Daniel 8:17, 19, and 26. What period of time does the 2300 days lead up to? Why does Daniel find that information so hard to take? How does the answer to that question help interpreters in their understanding of the 2300 days? (Monday’s Lesson)

3. Read Daniel 9:23. What instruction does the angel give to Daniel that helps us understand the timing of the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14? Read Daniel 9:24-27. What parts of this passage suggest to you events in the life and ministry of Jesus? (Tuesday's Lesson)
4. Read Daniel 9:24 again. What does it mean that the seventy weeks are "decreed" or "determined" upon Daniel's people? What does this have to do with the 2300 days of Daniel 8? How would you understand the series of six goals (each introduced by an infinitive) that would be accomplished during the seventy weeks? What are the possible meanings of "most holy"? Depending on your answer, what would "anointing the Most Holy" mean? How would these be fulfilled by the end of the seventy weeks? (Wednesday's Lesson)
5. Read Daniel 9:25 along with Ezra 7:13, 27. When do the seventy weeks begin? What implications does this have for the beginning of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14? When does that period end, and how does that fit in with the goals stated in Daniel 9:24? At what point in this prophecy is Messiah supposed to come? What does the word "Messiah" mean and what implications might that have for the fulfillment of this prophecy? How was this anointing understood in New Testament times (Matt 3:15-16; Mark 15:38)? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Daniel 9:26-27. According to Daniel 9:26, what will happen to "the anointed one"? Is the "prince" of verse 26 the same as the "prince" of verse 25 (note: the Hebrew word for "prince" [*nagid*] is the same in both verses)? What historical event does the latter part of verse 26 seem to be referring to? Which prince is the "he" in verse 27 referring to? How does the first half of verse 27 apply to Jesus' ministry on earth? Is the "he" of the second half of verse 27 the same as the one in the first half? How is this prophecy understood in the context of the end of the seventy weeks? (Wednesday's Lesson)
7. Read Daniel 8:3-13. What language is there in these verses that set the stage for a reference to the sanctuary in verse 14? What is going on with the sanctuary that requires a cleansing or restoration? What ritual in the context of the Hebrew sanctuary and temple would come closest to such a cleansing or restoration (see Lev 16:16)? What is it in Leviticus 16 that requires a cleansing of the sanctuary? If the restoration of the sanctuary is a New Testament reality (AD 1844), what would that mean in New Testament terms? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. Read Leviticus 13:26-29. What did God command people to do on the Day of Atonement and what should that mean for us today? What might Revelation 3:16-17 add to our understanding of this? (Thursday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: A question came in last week that really touched my heart. This person wrote, “How are we who have been raised as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, and have been taught to fear God and His judgments, to change to a love relationship? When you asked last Friday night, ‘Would you be comfortable if the Father walked in?’ I hesitated to answer, and then I said ‘I hope so.’ I am afraid! How do I dispel this fear?”

Graham: Oh, I know the One who would love to hear that question, would be God Himself. If you would look at God and say, “God, I hesitate to tell You this, but I’m scared.”

And I wonder what He would do. Would He say, “I appreciate that?”

Or would He say, “I think maybe I’d better not talk to you any longer, you’re so scared. I’ll send for My Son.”

Well, in practicality I think the solution is to become convinced in Scripture that the One who came is fully God. We’re not afraid of Jesus. But to realize the One who was with us is no less than God! And that’s what the Sabbath reminds us of, that gentle Jesus—who was afraid of Him? He is the Almighty Creator. And then if we could just come to the place where we would truly accept what we call the “testimony of Jesus.” The ultimate testimony of Jesus is, “Do you want to know what My Father is like? If you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.” We find it hard to believe that. So I think we need to read it over and over and come to the place where we really are convinced. You want to know what God is like? Look at Christ, for Christ is God. And as we think of it, number one, it seems incredible, for it takes a little time. And number two, the enemy is opposed to our knowing this, so he will throw up every roadblock he can to keep us from believing this incredible truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10 with Lou Venden, “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>*

“I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, with an everlasting gospel to proclaim ...”

Hopefully we Adventists have not come up with a new version of the gospel or we’re out. It had better be the everlasting good news. If the gospel is the good news about God, the kind of person he is, he has always been that kind of person, he still is, and he always will be. If the good news is the truth about God then that truly qualifies as the everlasting good news. And the fact that God is this kind of a God will be the basis of our faith and freedom for eternity.

“... to proclaim to everyone on this earth. and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God...”

Now we know what fear means, when the context calls for it, it means terror, when the context does not call for it, it means reverence. What does God want of his loyal children? When John

fell at his feet to worship him in chapter 1 he said, “Fear not”, didn’t he? So let’s not make this mean be terrified of God. It is reverence. “Happy is the man who fears the Lord”, the Bible says. “Happy is the man who is scared stiff of God”? Hardly. So this is “revere God.” What do you have in your version for that? I think a lot of insight has been shown in some of the modern versions. Yes?

COMMENT: “Honor and praise.”

“Honor and praise” is excellent. That is to fear God and give glory. “Honor God and praise.” I think the *Good News* version of the Bible, the American Bible Society version, sometimes known as *Today’s English* has done a superb job with the Three Angel’s Messages and in many other respects, I greatly admire that version. Anything else in the versions?

COMMENT: *Phillips* has ‘reverence’.

Reverence, now that is very specifically right. Reverence God and give him glory. Praise him, honor him. Well, if you know what the everlasting good news is that is what you feel like doing. We worship God for being the kind of person he has revealed himself to be, at such great cost. But, “the hour of his judgment has come. “Now that could be terrifying but are we prepared to explain the judgment? Who wrote down the words of Jesus to his disciples? “Actually, neither my Father or I will judge anyone. The word, the truth, will be your judge in the last days.” Wasn’t it John? John 3; John 12. We ought to be able to explain the judgment, and what is God looking for in the judgment. “And worship the Creator.” And one way in which we worship him is through the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath. Not as an arbitrary thing but because of all of its meanings. {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)

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel’s Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 “God’s Last Pleading with His Children” is available at: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—“God’s Last Pleading with His Children”

Further Study with Ellen White

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men. {SC 10.3}

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}

Up to the time of Christ's first advent, men worshiped cruel, despotic gods. Even the Jewish mind was reached through fear, and not love. Christ's mission on the earth was to reveal to men that God was not a despot, but a heavenly Father, full of love and mercy for His children. {18MR 112.4}

But . . . when the great controversy shall be ended, then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. {DA 764.3}

Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character, and to make it beautiful with His own glory. {DA 37.3}

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}

Looking upon man, God saw his desperate rebellion, and He devised a remedy. Christ was His gift to the world for man's reconciliation. The Son of God was appointed to come to this earth to take humanity and by His own example to be a great educating power among men. His experience in man's behalf was to enable men to resist Satan's power. He came to mold

character and to give mental power, to shed abroad the beams of true education, that the true aim of life might not be lost sight of. The sons of men had had a practical knowledge of evil; Christ came to the world to show them that He had planted for them the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. {CT 33.3}

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. {FLB 129.2}

The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour's life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man's redemption. {SC 21.2}

Could your eyes be opened, you would see your heavenly Father bending over you in love; and could you hear His voice it would be in tones of compassion to you who are prostrate with suffering and affliction. Stand fast in His strength; there is rest *for you*. {HP 272.5}

God is to us a tender, compassionate, heavenly Father. {ML 289.6}

The love of God to man is incomprehensible, broad as the world, high as heaven, and as enduring as eternity. {HP 115.5}

In word and in deed the Messiah, during His earthly ministry, was to reveal to mankind the glory of God the Father. Every act of His life, every word spoken, every miracle wrought, was to make known to fallen humanity the infinite love of God. {PK 696.3}

Infinite love—how great it is! God made the world to enlarge heaven. He desires a larger family of created intelligences (MS 78, 1901). {1BC 1081.2}

When we consider that Christ died for the ungodly while they were yet sinners, we are led to realize how willing and even anxious He is to bless us, that we may be a blessing to others (*Review and Herald*, Apr. 21, 1896). {LHU 353.5}

The fall of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent. Redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam, but an eternal purpose, suffered to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world, but for the good of all the worlds that God had created. . . . {TMK 18.2}

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character are revealed. By the marvelous display of His love in giving "his only begotten Son," . . . the character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. {TMK 18.5}

Jesus says, “My sheep hear my voice, . . . and they follow me” (John 10:27). The Shepherd of Israel does not drive His flock, but He leads them. His attitude is wholly one of invitation. {TMK 52.4}

The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant. So surely as there never was a time when God was not, so surely there never was a moment when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest His grace to humanity. . . . {AG 130.2}

God’s work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power, to meet the wants of men in the different ages. Beginning with the first gospel promise, and coming down through the patriarchal and Jewish ages, and even to the present time, there has been a gradual unfolding of the purposes of God in the plan of redemption. . . . He who proclaimed the law from Sinai, and delivered to Moses the precepts of the ritual law, is the same that spoke the sermon on the mount. . . . The Teacher is the same in both dispensations. God’s claims are the same. The principles of His government are the same. {AG 130.4}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {TMK 366.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 7 “Worshipping the Creator”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 1:9, Isaiah 40:26, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Colossians 1:17, Revelation 4:11, John 19:16–30.

Memory Text

“ ‘You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created’ ” (Revelation 4:11, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Companion in Tribulation
- III. Worship the Creator
- IV. A God Who Is Close
- V. Gospel, Judgment, Creation
- VI. The Creator on the Cross
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Revelation 4:11 and 5:9. What reasons are given in these texts for worshipping God and the Lamb? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Revelation 1:9, Mark 13:21, John 16:33 and Acts 14:22. What message is given in these texts for those who follow Jesus? Read Revelation 14:7. What evidence can you think of that suggests this is an extremely important text in the book of Revelation? What is your understanding of worship? Why and how should we worship God? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Revelation 14:7 again. What is the basis for worship in this text? What does the natural world tell us about God? What is the Old Testament background for the latter part of this verse? What evidence can you find in the passage and its context that the author of Revelation had the fourth commandment in mind when he wrote this verse? (Monday’s Lesson)

4. Any scientific study of the universe makes it clear that God is immensely powerful. Why doesn't He use that power to intervene more often in the tribulations we face in life? Since God is so great, does the Bible teach that He is distant from us (see 2 Corinthians 5:17; Psalm 139:13-15; Acts 17:27; Colossians 1:17)? Acts 17:27 tells us that God wants to be found when we search for Him. If that is true, why is it so hard to find God sometimes? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Isaiah 57:15. What is the difference between immanence and imminence? When you think of the immanence of God, how does it make you feel? (Tuesday's Lesson)
6. Read Revelation 14:6-7. The passage speaks of the everlasting gospel, the hour of judgment, and worshiping the Creator. What relationship would you see between these three concepts? What is there about Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:13-17, Revelation 4:11 and Romans 5:17-19 that helps us to understand this relationship? What are some consequences for our understanding of God if we believe in long ages of evolution as the origin of the earth and the universe? (Wednesday's Lesson)
7. Thursday's lesson is entitled "The Creator on the Cross". Read John 19:16-30. What difference does it make to know that the one hanging on the cross is the same being who created the world? Note Philippians 2:6-8, where Jesus leaves the highest place in the universe to willingly descend to the lowest place in the universe. When you first became aware of this amazing reality, how did you respond? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. The conflict between worshiping God and worshiping other gods belongs to the very center of the cosmic conflict. What difference should that understanding make in our lives today? (Friday's Lesson)
9. Think about an experience in which you unmistakably saw the power of God at work in your life. What difference does it make that the God who touched your life is the Creator of the whole universe? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now when we read that first angel's message to "worship the Creator of the heaven and earth, the Creator of the sea and springs," perhaps we are reminded that the first mention of the Sabbath comes in the Bible at the end of creation week. 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 day 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! {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>

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel’s Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 “God’s Last Pleading with His Children” is available at: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—“God’s Last Pleading with His Children”

Further Study with Ellen White

When the persecutors of John, the beloved disciple, sought to still his voice and destroy his influence among the people, they exiled him to the Isle of Patmos. But they could not separate him from the Divine Teacher. On lonely Patmos, John could study the things that God had created. In the rugged rocks, in the waters that surrounded the island, he could see the greatness and majesty of God. And while he was communing with God, and studying the book of nature, he heard a voice speaking to him, the voice of the Son of God. Jesus was John’s teacher upon the Isle of Patmos, and He there unfolded to His servant wonderful things that were to take place in time to come. {FE 423.3}

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be

known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. {DA 324.1}

The angels of glory find their joy in giving,—giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know. {DA 21.1}

He has linked us to Himself by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. This world is not all sorrow and misery. “God is love,” is written upon every opening bud, upon the petals of every flower, and upon every spire of grass. Though the curse of sin has caused the earth to bring forth thorns and thistles, there are flowers upon the thistles and the thorns are hidden by roses. All things in nature testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy. His prohibitions and injunctions are not intended merely to display His authority, but in all that He does He has the well-being of His children in view. He does not require them to give up anything that it would be for their best interest to retain. {PP 599.4}

The things of nature that we now behold give us but a faint conception of Eden’s glory. Sin has marred earth’s beauty; on all things may be seen traces of the work of evil. Yet much that is beautiful remains. Nature testifies that One infinite in power, great in goodness, mercy, and love, created the earth, and filled it with life and gladness. Even in their blighted state, all things reveal the handiwork of the great Master Artist. Wherever we turn, we may hear the voice of God, and see evidences of His goodness. {MH 411.1}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. Since sin brought separation between man and his Maker, no man has seen God at any time, except as He is manifested through Christ. {MH 419.1}

Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. Yet not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it was revealed in Christ. {MH 419.3}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {MH 419.4}

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries,

the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. {MH 415.1}

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made “in the image of God,” and it was the Creator’s design that they should populate the earth (RH Feb. 11, 1902). {1BC 1081.3}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {Ed 16.1}

Next to the angelic beings, the human family, formed in the image of God, are the noblest of His created works. God desires them to become all that He has made it possible for them to be, and to do their very best with the powers He has given them. {MH 397.1}

[B]y beholding Jesus, talking of His love and perfection of character, we become changed into His image. By contemplating the lofty ideal He has placed before us, we shall be uplifted into a pure and holy atmosphere, even the presence of God. When we abide here, there goes forth from us a light that irradiates all who are connected with us. {MH 492.2}

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. It is not as the result of a mechanism, that, once set in motion, continues its work, that the pulse beats and breath follows breath. In God we live and move and have our being. Every breath, every throb of the heart, is the continual evidence of the power of an ever-present God. {6BC 1062.5}

The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves—it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. With it come serenity and composure. It implants in the soul, joy that nothing earthly can destroy,—joy in the Holy Spirit,—health-giving, life-giving joy. {MH 115.3}

Our Saviour’s words, “Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28), are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills. Though men have brought suffering upon themselves by their own wrongdoing, He regards them with pity. In Him they may find help. He will do great things for those who trust in Him. {MH 115.4}

The truths of God's word are not mere sentiments, but the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding is removed. {CT 452.2}

When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—A changed life. {OHC 159.5}

Resting in the love of Christ, trusting the Redeemer and Life-giver to work out for you the salvation of your soul, you will know, as you draw nearer and still nearer to Him, what it means to endure the seeing of Him who is invisible. God desires us to rest content in His love. The contentment that Christ bestows is a gift worth infinitely more than gold and silver and precious stones. . . . {HP 186.3}

All the heavenly intelligences were watching with intense interest the warfare that was going on upon the earth—the earth that Satan claimed as his dominion. Every moment was big with eternal realities. How would the conflict end? The angels looked for the justice of God to be revealed, His anger to be aroused against the prince of darkness and his sympathizers. But lo, mercy prevailed. When the Son of God might have come to the world to condemn, He came as righteousness and peace, to save not merely the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but all the world—every son and daughter of Adam who would believe on Him, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. What an exhibition of the love of Jehovah! This is love without a parallel. {TMK 19.3}

When Christ cried out, "It is finished," all heaven triumphed. The controversy between Christ and Satan in regard to the execution of the plan of salvation was ended. The spirit of Satan and his works had taken deep root in the affections of the children of men. For Satan to have come into power would have been death to the world. The implacable hatred he felt toward the Son of God was revealed in his manner of treating Him while He was in the world. Christ's betrayal, trial, and crucifixion were all planned by the fallen foe. His hatred, carried out in the death of the Son of God, placed Satan where his true diabolical character was revealed to all created intelligences that had not fallen through sin. {5BC 1149.9}

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. {DA 568.3}

In the scenes that transpired in the judgment hall and at Calvary, we see what the human heart is capable of when under the influence of Satan. Christ submitted to crucifixion, although the

heavenly host could have delivered Him. The angels suffered with Christ. God Himself was crucified with Christ; for Christ was one with the Father. Those who reject Christ, those who will not have this man to rule over them, choose to place themselves under the rule of Satan, to do his work as his bondslaves. Yet for them Christ yielded up His life on Calvary (BE Aug. 6, 1894). {5BC 1108.5}

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. Not one that in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. The Saviour is by the side of His tempted and tried ones. With Him there can be no such thing as failure, loss, impossibility, or defeat; we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. When temptations and trials come, do not wait to adjust all the difficulties, but look to Jesus, your helper. {DA 490.5}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 8 “The Sabbath *and the End*”

Read for this week’s study

James 2:8–13; Deuteronomy 5:12–15; Psalm 33:6, 9; Revelation 14; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1.

Memory Text

“And to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Judgment, Creation, and Accountability
- III. The Sabbath and Creation
- IV. A Not-So-Subtle Deception
- V. Creation, the Sabbath, and the End Time
- VI. The Sabbath and Eternal Rest
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

- 1. “Creation provides a true sense of self-worth. [...] There is no one else like you in all the universe. You are unique, a one-of-a-kind creation, a being of such immense value that the God who created the cosmos took upon Himself our fleshly bodies and offered Himself as a sacrifice for you and your sins!” (Sabbath afternoon)
- 2. Sunday’s lesson connects the idea of creation, accountability and judgment. Monday’s lesson emphasizes the link between Creation and Sabbath. “Sabbath is a symbol of rest, not works; of grace, not legalism; of assurance, not condemnation; of depending upon Him, not upon ourselves. Each Sabbath we rejoice in His goodness, and praise Him for the salvation that can be found only in Christ.” (Monday’s lesson)
- 3. Tuesday’s lesson emphasizes the literal six-day creation versus the evolutionary theory of long ages and the fact that keeping Sabbath in that context “would make absolutely no sense at all”.

4. “It is because our world so desperately needs the reassuring message of Creation that God gave us the Sabbath.” God gave the Sabbath to everyone—beginning with the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, and continuing to all people throughout history. He reminded His rescued people fresh out of Egypt of its radical nature (Exodus 16 & 20). And in the person of Jesus, He corrected a distorted understanding of Sabbath in first century Judaism.
5. Seventh-day Baptists (SDB) established their first congregation in London in 1651 (and in 1671 in Newport, Rhode Island) as the culmination of over 40 years of a dissent movement that gave up trying to reform the Church of England. Thus, in each era, Sabbath had its specific purpose and significance.
6. Wednesday’s lesson talks about the Sabbath as a test in the eschatological end times and Thursday connects the Sabbath with eternal rest in heaven. “The Sabbath is a metaphor for paradise and a testimony to God’s presence; in our prayers, we anticipate a messianic era that will be a Sabbath, and each Shabbat prepares us for that experience: Unless one learns how to relish the taste of Sabbath [...] one will be unable to enjoy the taste of eternity in the world to come.” (Abraham Heschel)
7. A Seventh-day Baptist laywoman, Rachel Oakes Preston testified about her Sabbath beliefs to the Millerites, but it was only after the Great Disappointment that the Sabbath doctrine was accepted among the splinter groups of Miller’s movement which was organized in 1863 into the Seventh-day Adventist church (with 3,500 members). Today SDBs have 19 conferences in 30 countries with over 20,000 members, while SDAs have 731 conferences in 212 countries with over 22 million members.
8. The verb “to worship” is used 24 times in the book of Revelation. Seven times between Rev 13:4 and 14:11 there is a call to worship the beast and/or his image. Only once in these chapters is there a call to worship God—Rev 14:7.
9. Everybody will end up worshiping somebody or something. Does our worship lift us up or bring us down? If we persecute or marginalize those who have a different opinion, or use power to uphold our understanding of truth, we manifest the characteristics of the Dragon and become like the beast of Revelation 13.
10. The church does not exist for its own sake or to impose something on others, but to create a worshiping community of connected people. Worship is the intentional turning to God and seeing all the greatness, goodness and glory that belongs to Him. Worship is giving God the place that rightfully belongs to Him. Worshiping God brings us into His presence and transforms us into His image. “Worship is responding to all that God is with all that we are.”
11. Worship prepares us to hear God’s voice – in our hearts, in the family, in the church and in the world. How ready are we to recognize God’s voice and see God’s work all around us? True worship brings us to joyfully participate in what God does today.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Yet Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for us, Mark 2:27. It was not to be a mere test of obedience, but rather to be a help. I believe that the great purpose of the Sabbath is to remind us of the truth that is the basis of our faith; the very truth that does set us free. In the first place, the Bible tells us in Exodus 20 and Exodus 31, that the Sabbath is designed to serve as a reminder that God created us; that we are his creatures. But to be more specific according to Colossians 1:16, the one who created us was none other than Christ himself. The seventh-day Sabbath reminds us that the one who came to save us is also the one who made us in the beginning. The gentle Jesus who died on Calvary is also the supreme, all-powerful creator of the universe. God did not send some subordinate person to die for us. The Creator came himself one who is equal with God, for he is God. By keeping holy the seventh-day Sabbath, we acknowledge our faith in Jesus as not only our Savior, but also our Creator and our God.

A second way in which the seventh-day Sabbath serves to strengthen faith is mentioned in Exodus 31:13 and Exodus 20:12, 20. There we're told the Sabbath is designed to remind us that God is the one who sanctifies us. Our sanctification includes not just forgiveness, but the healing of the damage sin has done. It means the harmonious development of our physical, mental and spiritual powers, until the image of God, in which we were originally created, is perfectly restored. The observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is an acknowledgement that only the Creator can perform such a marvelous work of healing and transformation. Just as he created us in the beginning, so he has the power to re-create us now. Surely it is no less a miracle of creation to restore fallen human beings than it was to create them perfect in the beginning. No wonder David prayed as he did after his sad experience with Bathsheba, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." Psalm 51:10.

Now some seek to accomplish this transformation by themselves by rigorous obedience, self-discipline and self-denial. The Sabbath comes each week to remind us that only by faith in our Creator can the healing work be done. It's strange that Sabbath-keeping should be thought to be a legalistic act; a denial of true faith. Actually, Sabbath-keeping done in the right spirit is a denial of legalism, a denial that we can save ourselves. It's an acknowledgment that only by faith in the one who created us in the beginning can we possibly be healed and re-created now. And what a perversion it is to suggest that seventh-day Sabbath keeping is legalism; except that we can turn it around that way—and it has been done. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Faith, Righteousness and Salvation, #13, "Faith and the seventh-day Sabbath", recorded April 3, 1975, Lynwood, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/13MMFRS> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMFRS> (Part 2)

There are more of course, but these three focuses or purposes of the Sabbath answer the three great questions that have stood in the minds of thinking people—the three great quests of philosophy. Where have we come from? Why are we here? And where do we go after we die?

But mankind has paid a heavy price for neglecting the Sabbath or substituting another day. For without the Sabbath to provide the answers to the three great questions of life, other solutions have been substituted. Where have we come from? Without the seventh-day Sabbath to remind us that in the beginning Christ created us, room has been left for the substitution of the theory of the evolutionary origin of the human race. Or as others say more scientifically, we don't know where we've come from.

Why are we here? How do we attain to the greatest good in life? Without the seventh-day Sabbath to remind us that righteousness and salvation come by faith in Jesus Christ, room has been left for the substitution of the fundamental error of righteousness by works. Or as others have said more carelessly, we don't know why we're here. So let's eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die!

And where do we go after we die? Without the seventh-day Sabbath to point forward to the second coming, to the rewards of faith and the results of sin, room has been left for the substitution of the belief in the natural immortality of the soul. Or as others prefer to say, we don't know where we go after we die. So again, let's eat, drink and be merry.

Incidentally, those three substitute answers, aren't they almost universally held? And not just in Christianity. Belief in the natural immortality of the soul is shared by almost everybody. The idea that salvation comes by works, Ellen White states that is the fundamental error of every false religious system, salvation by works. There are all kinds of substitute explanations as to where we came from that put God in a bad light, or that make of no effect the plan of salvation. But all three of these substitutions wipe out all the significance of the plan of salvation. This is why the seventh-day Sabbath is so vital a part of God's last message to the world. The main difference between the many religions in the world and true Christianity lies in the answers to these three great quests. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Faith, Righteousness and Salvation, #13, "Faith and the seventh-day Sabbath", recorded April 3, 1975, Lynwood, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/13MMFRS> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMFRS> (Part 2)

A third way in which the Sabbath serves to remind us of the truth and strengthen our faith in God is mentioned in Hebrews chapter four. There the Sabbath is described as a type and a foretaste of the final rest and restoration to come. Just as God rested from his labors at the end of creation week so there remains a Sabbath-like rest; the Greek says a '*sabbatismos*'. You can

almost hear the meaning of the word. “There remains there a Sabbath-like rest for the people of God. When the children of Israel marched into the land of Canaan, they failed to enter into God’s rest,” the apostle says, “because of lack of faith. They possessed the Promised Land but they did not enjoy the Sabbath-like rest that faith brings.” Just remember the book of Judges. Would you call that the Sabbath-like rest? That is not God’s intention. “But those who maintain their faith in Christ may begin to enjoy this rest even in this life and they will enter into it fully when they are admitted to the heavenly Canaan and Eden is restored.” So by keeping holy the seventh-day Sabbath, we acknowledge our anticipation of this Sabbath-like rest to come. We acknowledge our faith in the second coming of Christ and the re-creation of all things. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Faith, Righteousness and Salvation, #13, “Faith and the seventh-day Sabbath”, recorded April 3, 1975, Lynwood, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/13MMFRS> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMFRS> (Part 2)

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel’s Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 “God’s Last Pleading with His Children” is available at: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—“God’s Last Pleading with His Children”

Further Study with Ellen White

It is through the mighty agency of the Holy Spirit that the government of Satan is to be subdued and subjected. It is the Holy Spirit that convinces of sin, and expels it from the soul by the consent of the human agent. The mind is then brought under a new law, and that law is the royal law of liberty. Jesus came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul; for sin can triumph only when the liberty of the soul is extinguished. Jesus reached to the very depth of human woe and misery, and His love attracts man to Himself. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, He lifts the mind up from its degradation, and fastens it upon the eternal reality. {TDG 124.2}

Let it be made plain that the way of God’s commandments is the way of life. God has established the laws of nature, but His laws are not arbitrary exactions. Every “Thou shalt not,” whether in physical or in moral law, implies a promise. If we obey it, blessing will attend our

steps. God never forces us to do right, but He seeks to save us from the evil and lead us to the good. {MH 114.2}

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}

That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, "This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan." There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus. It is DO, and Live (Letter 89, 1898). {1BC 1105.2}

God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. He needed to lay aside his own interests and pursuits for one day of the seven, that he might more fully contemplate the works of God and meditate upon His power and goodness. He needed a Sabbath to remind him more vividly of God and to awaken gratitude because all that he enjoyed and possessed came from the beneficent hand of the Creator. {PP 48.2}

The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator. In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea, we still may hear His voice who talked with Adam in Eden in the cool of the day. And as we behold His power in nature we find comfort, for the word that created all things is that which speaks life to the soul. He "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:6. {DA 281.4}

The Sabbath is a sign of creative and redeeming power; it points to God as the source of life and knowledge; it recalls man's primeval glory, and thus witnesses to God's purpose to re-create us in His own image. {Ed 250.1}

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment was instituted in Eden. After God had made the world and created man upon the earth, He made the Sabbath for man. After Adam's sin and fall nothing was taken from the law of God. The principles of the Ten Commandments existed

before the fall and were of a character suited to the condition of a holy order of beings. After the fall the principles of those precepts were not changed, but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state. {SR 145.2}

The Sabbath is a pledge given by God to man—a sign of the relation existing between the Creator and His created beings. {3SM 256.1}

Above all lower orders of being, God designed that man, the crowning work of His creation, should express His thought and reveal His glory. {MH 415.3}

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}

The Bible with its precious gems of truth was not written for the scholar alone. On the contrary, it was designed for the common people; and the interpretation given by the common people, when aided by the Holy Spirit, accords best with the truth as it is in Jesus. The great truths necessary for salvation are made clear as the noonday, and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God. {5T 331.2}

God's holy, educating Spirit is in His word. A light, a new and precious light, shines forth from every page. Truth is there revealed, and words and sentences are made bright and appropriate for the occasion, as the voice of God speaking to the soul. {COL 132.2}

God's abounding love and presence will give you the power of self-control. He will mold and fashion your mind and character. He will direct your aims and purposes and capabilities in a channel that will give you moral and spiritual power which you will not have to leave here in this world but can carry with you and retain through eternal ages. {TMK 53.6}

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}

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is

perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. {MB 109.2}

God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal home of the redeemed. {AH 540.3}

What is the “rest” promised?—It is the consciousness that God is true, that He never disappoints the one who comes to Him. His pardon is full and free, and His acceptance means rest to the soul, rest in His love. {OHC 97.7}

There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God’s people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home. {ML 358.2}

In the earth made new the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasure that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. “They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. . . .” {ML 358.4}

There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And there will appear new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects of study to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul. {ML 358.5}

There certainly is and ever will be employment in heaven. The whole family of the redeemed will not live in a state of dreamy idleness. There remaineth a rest to the people of God. In heaven activity will not be wearing and burdensome; it will be rest. The whole family of the redeemed will find their delight in serving Him whose they are by creation and by redemption. {ML 358.6}

To the weary and heavy laden, to those who have fought the good fight of faith, it will be a glorious rest; for the youth and vigor of immortality will be theirs, and against sin and Satan they will no longer have to contend. {ML 358.7}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 9 “A City Called Confusion”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 17:1, 2, 15; Revelation 18:1–4; Revelation 17:4–6; Matthew 16:18; Jeremiah 50:33-38; Psalm 115:4–8.

Memory Text

“ ‘These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful’ ” (Revelation 17:14, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Two Contrasting Systems
- III. The Wine of the Wrath
- IV. Mystery, Babylon the Great
- V. A Call to Commitment
- VI. Babylon: The Center of Idolatry
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

- 1. “In this week’s lesson, we will study these two women of Revelation and probe, more deeply, the conflict between truth and error.” (Sabbath afternoon)
- 2. The second angel’s message is only one verse long in Revelation 14:8, but it is then developed and expanded further in chapters 17 & 18. Sunday’s lesson compares God’s faithful people from the image in chapter 12 with an apostate religious system in chapter 17.
- 3. Monday’s lesson discusses the wine of the wrath of God from Revelation 17 & 18. What causes such a strong reaction on God’s part? Tuesday’s lesson looks further into Revelation 17 to unveil the nature of Babylon and the subsequent call to commitment to God in light of the prevailing apostasy (Wednesday’s lesson).
- 4. When the call “Babylon has fallen, has fallen!” was given the first time, it was good news (Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 51:6-8). How was this call the “eternal gospel” in its

antitypical meaning of Revelation 14 in John's day? And how can it be "good news" in our context of the end-time world? Remember, it is one message given by three messengers (14:6-12)!

5. What do we learn from reading Genesis 11:1-9 and Daniel 3 & 6 about the nature and significance of Babylon?
6. When we try to reach heaven by our own effort and self-sufficiency, or build our identity on our achievements and self-preservation, we follow the footsteps of Babylon.
7. If we ridicule or persecute those who have a different opinion, or use power to uphold our understanding of truth, we follow the footsteps of Babylon. Then we are also guilty of worshiping a false image of God (Thursday's lesson).
8. Jesus has given authority to His church (Matthew 16:18 cf. Revelation 17:13-14). But all institutions have a tendency towards self-preservation. What does it mean to come out of a broken system or institution (Revelation 18:4)? The church does not exist for its own sake but to create a worshiping and serving community of connected people (Matthew 25:31-46).
9. The dragon of Revelation 12 was once "the Shining One," described in one of the Bible's finest poems as "the king of Babylon" (Isaiah 14:4). That is Babylon's starting point. What is Babylon's ending point? "And in you" — in Babylon — "was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been killed with violence on earth" (Revelation 18:24). While the Babylonian or Roman Empires, or the medieval church may be blamed for much, they should not be blamed for the blood "of all who have been killed with violence".
10. Scientists say that intelligence is a complex thing to measure. That's why they express it using the IQ—the intelligence quotient and EQ—the emotional quotient. How would you apply a BQ — "Babylonian quotient" to your own mentality and that of your (local) church? How can coming out of a Babylonian mentality be "good news" for us today?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Isn't it becoming clearer in scripture, that when God indeed has used force and displayed his power, it may have gained attention, but it has never accomplished what he really wants? How about the Flood? Did the Flood lead people to deny the existence and power of God? No. When they built Babel, was it because they didn't believe in God? Was it because they didn't believe he had the power to destroy? Or was it because they *did* believe in God, and they did believe he had the power to destroy? Now, they didn't think he could be trusted when he said, "I'll never drown you again." They didn't believe that. That's why they built that tower. Isn't that what it says?

You see, they really believed in God, his existence and his power. That's why to believe that doesn't say which side you're on. The devils believe that, too. In fact, they had such confidence that God could destroy, they built that tower as tall as they did. You see, the exercise of power and force may only make rebels worse, but it might for a moment gain the attention of those who are sinners indeed, but would love to hear what you would have to say, if they and everybody else would be quiet. And *God* wins people every once in a while, during those quiet moments. But the devil must mock him for failure to be able to clear up the problems on this earth by the exercise of power. But the Great Controversy is not over who has the power, is it? It's over who is telling the truth. God has been accused of the abuse of divine power, and I'm sure Satan accused him of abusing his power in the time of the Flood. "See what he'll do; obey him, or he'll drown you!" The inhabitants of Babylon believed that. "Believe God, or he'll drown you!" Well, they didn't want to obey him, so they built the tall tower so they could escape the next flood when it came! {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Exodus, recorded October 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/3MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: This question was asked: "Could the word 'wrath' have been translated differently, as in the three angels' messages? Could there have been a better word than 'wrath' used?"

Graham: Hmm. That's an interesting question. That's a limitation of human language. The word is *orge*, which just **did** mean wrath, even fury. God is limited to our human language with all the hazards thereunto appertaining. And so we have to take the whole context to understand. The question there that appeals to me most is, "Why would God use the word at all, if He does not wish to be understood as angry?" It would seem to me that He has left the impression that He is angry with us.

I would have to compare that with a father's conversation with his little girl. You've tried everything else under the sun to persuade her not to help herself to cookies at three in the afternoon and it hasn't worked. But finally you put this little youngster in front of you, and you know how it is with the little daughters; we both have them, and how cute and innocent they can look, even in the midst of iniquity. And you say, "Look, if you do that one more time, Daddy's going to be **very, very** cross with you." Now, don't smile when you say that, because she doesn't know what "cross" means. She can't look it up in *Webster's*. She knows what "cross" means by the look on your face and the tone of your voice. So you feel like a bully. Here's this little, tiny child with pigtails, and you're saying, "Daddy will be very, very cross with you."

And a little later, though you thought you had impressed her adequately; you find her tiptoeing around the corner and reaching up and taking another cookie. And it's so cute, you wish you had your camera. And then you suddenly realize, no, this is the time for some stern discipline. And you put this helpless little girl in front of you. She puts her hands behind her and assumes that little posture that little girls can, and you as a big brute say, "Daddy told you that if you did that one more time, he'd be very, very cross." You have to look cross, sound cross. Don't glance over to your wife, you know, or you'll melt. You've got to go through with this thing.

I think it's a matter of communication. And God has dealt with children. We've been the immature children. He even has to say, "Do that one more time and I will be furious with you! And I wish I didn't have to say that one more time." So I think our human experience helps us to understand the Scripture. Parents and teachers and little ones are in the best position to read the Bible sympathetically, it seems to me. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #9 with Lou Venden, "There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God" 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/9MMCAG>

If we have allowed God to reveal himself through all the various stories and teachings of Scripture, if we have learned to view the Bible as a whole and relate all its parts to the one central theme—the everlasting Good News about our gracious and trustworthy God—then we are ready to read some of the most fearsome words in all the sixty-six books, the message of the third angel of Revelation 14:

"And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If any one worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also shall drink the wine of God's wrath poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and he shall be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever; and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name'" (verses 9–11).

God must hate having to speak to us like this. But Jesus joins with his Father in sending us this message (see Revelation 1:1; 22:16). The One who said "Blessed are the meek" must have an urgent reason for warning us in such fearsome words.

The Bible has prepared us to understand the symbolic terms. The beast and its image have already been mentioned as representing God's enemies in the great controversy, and the mark as the badge of loyalty to Satan's side (see Revelation 13). The fire that lasts "for ever" has already been compared to the burning of a field of stubble (Malachi 4:1); it is like the "eternal fire" that totally consumed Sodom and Gomorrah many centuries ago (Jude 7). And lest the

fearsomeness of the warning should lead us to doubt the gracious purposes of God, he sends the first and second angels with messages that prepare us for the third.

The first angel reminds of the everlasting truth. He calls on all men everywhere to make up their minds about God. Do we find the weight of evidence a sufficient basis for our faith? Can we trust and worship the One who created the whole vast universe?

The second angel reminds us of the falsity and deception of God's enemies. Every system based on Satan's lies is fallen in corruption and defeat.

Then the third angel warns of consequence. It is not God's will that any should perish. Nothing is plainer in all Scripture! But if we prefer Satan's lies to the truth, if we persist in rejecting God's every effort to save and heal, there is nothing else he can do but sadly give us up and hand us over to the awful consequence of our own rebellious choice. This is what it means to experience God's wrath unmixed with mercy at the end. And if we are not healed and ready to live in his presence again, the life-giving glory of him who is love will consume all that is out of harmony when he comes. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 109-110. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-10>

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel's Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 "God's Last Pleading with His Children" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—"God's Last Pleading with His Children"

Further Study with Ellen White

Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan. {GC 510.3}

Christ came to this earth in human form that He might stand as the Captain of our salvation, so that we should not be overcome by Satan's power. And when the enemy has seemed to be

gaining a signal victory over righteousness, God has been working in mercy and power to counteract his designs. {TDG 308.4}

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 the Scriptures. {AG 34.2}

In the closing scenes of this earth's history, when intensity is taking possession of every earthly element, the Lord requires of us a vigilance that knows no relaxation. But we are not left to struggle alone. Amid the dangers increasing on every hand, those who walk humbly before God, distrustful of their own wisdom, will have angels as their helpers and protectors. In times of special peril they will know the power of God's keeping care.—RH April 25, 1907. {TA 272.3}

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

Every weak, doubting, struggling soul who yields fully to the Lord is placed in direct touch with agencies that enable him to overcome. Heaven is near to him, and he has the support and help of angels of mercy in every time of trial and need. {AA 299.1}

A guardian angel is appointed to every follower of Christ. These heavenly watchers shield the righteous from the power of the wicked one. . . . The angels appointed to minister to the children of God have at all times access to His presence. {GC 512.2}

Thus God's people, exposed to the deceptive power and unsleeping malice of the prince of darkness, and in conflict with all the forces of evil, are assured of the unceasing guardianship of heavenly angels. {GC 513.1}

But those who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people.—GC 511-513, 516, 517. {TA 13.1}

Angels of God are watching over us. Upon this earth there are thousands and tens of thousands of heavenly messengers commissioned by the Father to prevent Satan from obtaining any advantage over those who refuse to walk in the path of evil. And these angels who guard God's children on earth are in communication with the Father in heaven.—HP 99. {TA 16.4}

The angels are with us every day, to guard and protect us from the assaults of the enemy. {TA 19.1}

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}

Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion. {GC 390.1}

The Lord's angels are appointed to keep strict watch over those who put their faith in the Lord, and these angels are to be our special help in every time of need. Every day we are to come to the Lord with full assurance of faith, and to look to Him for wisdom. . . . Those who are guided by the Word of the Lord will discern with certainty between falsehood and truth, between sin and righteousness. {AG 201.4}

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. He passes from death unto life; he becomes spiritual and discerns spiritual things. The wisdom of God enlightens his mind, and he beholds wondrous things out of His law. As a man is converted by the truth, the work of transformation of character goes on. He has an increased measure of understanding. In becoming a man of obedience to God, he has the mind of Christ, and the will of God becomes his will. {1SM 338.1}

As we near the time when principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places will be brought into warfare against the truth, when the deceiving power of Satan will be so great that if it were possible he will deceive the very elect, we must have our discernment sharpened by divine enlightenment, that we may know the Spirit that is of God, that we may not be ignorant of Satan's devices. {MR311 49.1}

Press close to Jesus, and place your hand in His, and He will firmly hold your hand, and never let go of the soul who maintains his faith in Him. . . . {UL 42.3}

The precious Saviour will send help just when we need it. The way to heaven is consecrated by His footprints. Every thorn that wounds our feet has wounded His. Every cross that we are called to bear He has borne before us. The Lord permits conflicts, to prepare the soul for peace. The time of trouble is a fearful ordeal for God's people; but it is the time for every true believer to look up, and by faith he may see the bow of promise encircling him. {GC 633.1}

Amidst great discouragement, Nehemiah made God his trust, his sure defense. And He who was the support of His servant then has been the dependence of His people in every age. In every crisis His people may confidently declare, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31. However craftily the plots of Satan and his agents may be laid, God can detect them, and bring to nought all their counsels. The response of faith today will be the response made by

Nehemiah, “Our God shall fight for us;” for God is in the work, and no man can prevent its ultimate success. {PK 645.2}

When the Christian takes his baptismal vow, divine help is pledged to him. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit stand ready to work in his behalf. God places at his command the resources of heaven, that he may be an overcomer. His own power is small; but God is omnipotent, and God is his helper. Daily he is to make known his wants at the throne of grace. By faith and trust, by availing himself of the resources provided, he can be more than a conqueror. {OHC 157.5}

He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His work. He will thwart the purposes of wicked men and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amidst the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands. {PK 176.1}

God has a deep and earnest love for every member of the human family; not one is forgotten, not one is left helpless and deceived to be overcome by the enemy. And if those who have enlisted in the army of Christ will put on the whole armor of God, and wear it, they will be proof against all the assaults of the enemy. Those who really desire to be taught of God, and to walk in His way, have the sure promise that if they feel their lack of wisdom and ask of God, He will give liberally, and upbraid not. {FE 299.2}

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 counselors, and those who plot out mischief. {4BC 1161.1}

He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God’s saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a “God of gods,” able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him. {CC 252.5}

He finds His faithful ones, and holds communion with them, encouraging and strengthening them. And angels of God, that excel in strength, are sent forth by God to minister to His human workers who are speaking the truth to those who know it not. {8T 17.3}

From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armor, others took up the work. God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with

Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven. He has sent forth His angels to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against His people. {AA 11.2}

Through centuries of persecution, conflict, and darkness, God has sustained His church. Not one cloud has fallen upon it that He has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork His work, that He has not foreseen. All has taken place as He predicted. He has not left His church forsaken, but has traced in prophetic declarations what would occur, and that which His Spirit inspired the prophets to foretell has been brought about. All His purposes will be fulfilled. His law is linked with His throne, and no power of evil can destroy it. Truth is inspired and guarded by God; and it will triumph over all opposition. {AA 11.3}

God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church. {UL 315.5}

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. {GC 555.1}

He who places himself unreservedly under the guidance of the Spirit of God, will find that his mind expands and develops. He obtains an education in the service of God which is not one-sided and deficient, developing a one-sided character, but one which results in symmetry and completeness. Weaknesses that have been manifested in a vacillating will and powerless character, are overcome, for continual devotion and piety bring the man in such close relation to Christ that he has the mind of Christ. He is one with Christ, having soundness and strength of principle. His perception is clear, and he manifests that wisdom which comes from God. {1SM 338.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 10 “Satan’s Final Deceptions”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 12:9; Revelation 16:13, 14; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Ezekiel 8:16; Ezekiel 20:1–20; Revelation 18:4, 5.

Memory Text

“ ‘Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth’ ” (John 17:17, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Way That Seems Right in a Man’s Eyes
- III. The Old Lie of Immortality
- IV. Babylon: The Center of Sun Worship
- V. A Call to Faithfulness
- VI. Grace for Obedience
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

- 1. “In this week’s lesson, we will continue looking, not only at Babylon’s deceptions but at Jesus’ plan to save us from them and the death that they would otherwise bring.” (Sabbath afternoon)
- 2. Sunday’s lesson discusses the role of deception in the end time. What is the significance of Jesus’ words in Matthew 24:23-28 (cf. 6-10)?
- 3. Monday’s lesson looks at Revelation 16:13, 14 and 18:2, 23. What was the role of miracles at the time of Moses, Elijah, and Jesus and His disciples? What role do miracles play in the last days (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)? What is the purpose of the “holding back” period (2:6-8)? What are the implications of all this for our spiritual life and experiencing God’s presence and mighty works in everyday life?
- 4. What was so attractive for the Israelites in sun worship (cf. Ezekiel 8:16 and 2 Kings 23:5, 11)? (Tuesday’s lesson) What did God want to teach the Israelites by turning the sanctuary around? What does “going east of Eden” mean in the book of Genesis (cf. Revelation 16:12)? What cultural realities of today’s world are universally “worshiped” without being questioned by the majority?

5. Wednesday's lesson looks at Ezekiel 20:1–20 as a call to faithfulness. The original message was for people in Babylonian exile. What would a call to faithfulness look like in today's world? What might be the "idols of Egypt" and "Babylon" today? It is easy to make a long list of evils to be denounced. But the second angel's message is "good news". Is there a way to express this in a positive and motivating context, rather than denouncing things and people?
6. What comfort can we draw from Revelation 18:4, 5? (Thursday's lesson) Revelation 14 is the positive side of the negative story of Revelation 13. Babylon is used six times in Revelation. (Remember that numbers in the book of Revelation mean primarily quality rather than quantity!) It stands for "restlessness" and "falling short". What starts promising as "the gate of God" ends up in disappointing "confusion" (Genesis 11:1-9).
7. It is important to proclaim the true gospel (the first message) but also to be aware of the false gospel (the second message). The ultimate solution is not from an institution; those who live under the monstrous (Babylonian) rule can now hear the "good news". Yes, *the system is broken*, but God is going to repair all the damage. Observation alone could bring Israelites at the time of Babylonian exile and Christians in the first century Roman empire to an obvious conclusion that "pagan gods" are more powerful than Yahweh.
8. Thus comes the heavenly message: "Your God reigns!" He will rescue his people, he did not abandon the covenant, but he will do it through the work of a "servant", not the Babylonian way through might and power (Zechariah 4:6). You are free to go home! (Isaiah 52:7-9)
9. "Your God is coming back!" When Babylonians attacked the temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 1:1-2), it seemed that God had abandoned Israel. But now he will return, publicly and visibly (Isaiah 52:8; 40:5).
10. "God is doing a powerful and public work of rescue!" (52:10) He did when Jesus died on the cross (53:7) and all nations will now see it and benefit from it (cf. Revelation 18:4-5). In what way we can see and benefit from what God is doing *in us; through us and around us*? Because that's what the second angel's message is all about!

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

To some of us, the most important information we have to share with our fellow human beings around this planet is this truth about the way God runs his universe and what He wants of His children. We need to share this more urgently than ever before as we humans, all together, face the closing events of human history. Because before Christ returns, the Bible describes—in fact Jesus describes—a time of confusion and deception such as the world has never seen.

All of that will be leading up to Satan's final attempt to win the whole world to worship **him**, to trust **him**. He even asked Jesus to get down on His knees and worship him in the wilderness of temptation. Revelation 13 says that when Satan's campaign is over, the whole world **will** be

worshiping him, except those few who have not been deceived. So it should not surprise us, if we are as near the End as we believe we are, that we find ourselves surrounded on all sides by conflicting claims to religious authority. Certainly the development of modern media has made us more aware of this than ever before. As we see and listen to all these conflicting claims, how often they are supported by position, or power, or miracles, or claims of special communications from the Lord.

How Satan would enjoy it if he could turn God's friends on this planet against their heavenly Father! Or even more seriously, how he would love to deceive God's friends even as they continue professing to be His commandment-keeping people. That would be the most destructive. No wonder Paul said that we should grow up and not be so easily swayed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4). Again in Hebrews 5 he says we should grow up and have our faculties trained by practice to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7, "The Question of Authority" 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/7MMCAG>

Look at the next passage, in 2 Corinthians 11:13:

God's messengers [he raises a question]? They are counterfeits of the real thing, dishonest practitioners masquerading as the messengers of Christ. Nor do their tactics surprise me when I consider how Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light [he still pretends to be Lucifer, you know, the bearer of light and truth]. It is only to be expected that his angels will have the appearance of ministers of righteousness. Phillips

This of course, reminds us of Christ's most serious words, perhaps, that He ever spoke. And He spoke them to a group of very devout Sabbath-keeping, tithe-paying, Bible teachers in His day. Who, Bible students that they were, had just denounced Jesus' picture of His Father as satanic. Think of it! Sabbath-keepers, tithe-payers, Bible teachers telling Christ He had a devil. And He turned to them and uttered those extraordinary words in John 8:44, 45. And you can be sure there were tears in His voice when He said something like this:

The father whose sons you are [you Bible teachers] is the devil, and you are bent on carrying out the wishes of your father. He proved himself a murderer at the very beginning, and did not loyally stand by the truth; in fact, there is no spark of truth in him. Whenever he gives utterance to his falsehood, then he gives expression to his real character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. I, on the contrary, speak the truth, and therefore you do not believe me.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7, “The Question of Authority” 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/7MMCAG>

Satan who deceived even brilliant angels should find it easy to deceive us, and he’s even more experienced now than he was then. If it ever was essential to be demanding of evidence, to be transformed by the renewing of our minds that we may test and prove what is the truth, what is good as distinguished from what is not, isn’t this the time? This is the time when we will witness Satan’s last attempt to deceive and confuse, and with all the experience of the past he will focus all his endeavors on the few who persist in believing the truth and trusting God. We will see something worse than has ever been seen in the whole history of the universe. And somehow one group will survive, they will not be deceived. They will succeed in doing what a third of the brilliant angels failed to do. They will have their minds renewed. For religion to make light of mind, reason, intellect— it’s true they’ve been abused of course, but to make light of these is to play into the devil’s hands in these last days, and to set us up vulnerable and gullible when he comes as Christ. And when he makes all his claims and performs miracles to prove that he is Christ, we’d better be in this state of mind.

In fact, to be so dedicated to the truth, to be so concerned that we may discern the truth is an act of worship, it suggests here. Isn’t that true? What would please God more than to see people on this planet absolutely dedicated to evidence and truth? That we’re most eager to discern the truth from the false and we do not wish to be deceived. We wish to see God as he is that we may worship him aright and do the things that please him. I mean, this is an act of worship. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 12, recorded January 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/23MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/24MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

On the other hand, the Second Coming is as near as our last moment of breath. And that’s why I think of it at funerals. When a loved one dies, especially if he or she has been ill and in pain, the next moment of consciousness that person is face to face with the Lord at the Second Coming. And I love that Thessalonians passage which says if someone dies before the Lord comes and they feel maybe they have missed something? No. Thessalonians says, “They will arise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord.”

So the main thing is, more important than knowing when the end comes, is to trust God. And if I should die tonight, I want to die His trusting child, because then I will arise His trusting child. I’ll have no complaints. We’ll all have lots of questions. We might even say, “I kind of wanted to

live through that.” I think Paul did. Remember there, Paul said, “I’m torn between staying with you to help you and my desire to depart and be with the Lord.” He didn’t believe in the immortality of the soul. He knew that as a Roman citizen, when his head was cut off with that sharp sword, the next instant of consciousness he’d be face to face with the One he’d been preaching about with such pride. So he had no complaints.

So the end is really very, very near. Especially in a medical center like this when we see folk come to the end of their lives all the time, sometimes very sad. We have good news for them, “You fall asleep tonight; you will wake up the next moment from a dreamless sleep face to face with the Lord.” That’s how near it is. But I believe the big event is also near. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #19, “How Soon Will the Conflict Be Over?” recorded June 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/19MMCAG>

We usually use 1 John 3:4, and we usually translate that, “Sin is the transgression of the law.” But that’s a rather expansive translation of one word. And it tempts one to put the Ten Commandments up on the wall and say, “Well, I haven’t broken that one, and that one, and that one, and that one, so this has been a rather good day.” Paul used to look down the Ten, and on a Tuesday night when he knelt to pray, he could say, “This has been a good day. I haven’t murdered anybody. I haven’t committed adultery today. I haven’t stolen today. I haven’t broken the Sabbath, because it was Tuesday anyway. I thank Thee, Lord, I am not like this publican over here.” And then he looked at the tenth, and he realized he had been breaking them. Because sin in 1 John 3:4, is not “the transgression of the Law.” The Greek says “sin is lawlessness.” Sin is a state of mind. It’s an attitude. And that’s what is here. “Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, to him it is rebelliousness.” “*Lawlessness*” is the literal Greek word in 1 John 3:4. Moreover, when you think of the fact that it’s God who has told us what to do, and everything he has asked us to do is for our best good, and if we do not do it, that suggests distrust. And you remember in Romans 14, the last verse: “Whatever is not of faith and trust is sin.”

Sin is a breach of trust. And I think we would protect ourselves from a rather mechanical understanding—or *misunderstanding* of sin, if we put these three verses together instead of one. Romans 14, James 4 and 1 John 3. “Sin is lawlessness.” “Sin is knowing what you ought to do but not doing it.” “Sin is a breach of trust.” And I think they’re all in harmony there, aren’t they? You could even put Malachi with it: “Cursed be the cheat.” Not that God hates cheats. He just can’t help cheats. He can’t save and heal cheats. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – 1 & 2 Peter and James*, recorded July 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/75MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/76MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel's Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 "God's Last Pleading with His Children" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Conversations About God #17 "Satan's Final Effort to Deceive" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/17MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—"God's Last Pleading with His Children"

Conversations about God Chapter 17—"Satan's Final Effort to Deceive"

Further Study with Ellen White

There was no possible hope for the redemption of those who had witnessed and enjoyed the inexpressible glory of heaven, and had seen the terrible majesty of God, and, in presence of all this glory, had rebelled against Him. There were no new and wonderful exhibitions of God's exalted power that could impress them so deeply as those they had already experienced. If they could rebel in the very presence of glory inexpressible, they could not be placed in a more favorable condition to be proved. There was no reserve force of power, nor were there any greater heights and depths of infinite glory to overpower their jealous doubts and rebellious murmuring (*Redemption: The Temptation of Christ*, pp. 18, 19). {4BC 1163.3}

Eve really believed the words of Satan, but her belief did not save her from the penalty of sin. She disbelieved the words of God, and this was what led to her fall. In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth. {PP 55.2}

From the opening of the great controversy in heaven, Satan has maintained his cause through deception; and Christ has been working to unveil his schemes and to break his power. {DA 210.2}

God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them and admire His handiwork. As we study His works, angels from heaven will be by our side to enlighten our minds and guard them from Satan's deceptions. {CT 457.1}

Go to God for yourselves, pray for divine enlightenment, that you may know that you do know what is truth, that when the wonderful miracle-working power of Satan shall be displayed, and

the enemy shall come as an angel of light, you may distinguish between the genuine work of God and the imitative work of the powers of darkness. {RH, December 24, 1889 par. 11}

The manifestation of God's love, His mercy and His goodness, and the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart to enlighten and renew it, place us, through faith, in so close connection with Christ that, having a clear conception of His character, we are able to discern the masterly deceptions of Satan. {5T 744.2}

In the last days he [Satan] will appear in such a manner as to make men believe him to be Christ come the second time into the world. He will indeed transform himself into an angel of light. But while he will bear the appearance of Christ in every particular, so far as mere appearance goes, it will deceive none but those who . . . are seeking to resist the truth.—5T 698. {TA 270.4}

Satan's policy in this final conflict with God's people is the same that he employed in the opening of the great controversy in heaven. He professed to be seeking to promote the stability of the divine government, while secretly bending every effort to secure its overthrow. And the very work which he was thus endeavoring to accomplish he charged upon the loyal angels. {GC 591.1}

God never forces the will or the conscience; but Satan's constant resort—to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise seduce—is compulsion by cruelty. Through fear or force he endeavors to rule the conscience and to secure homage to himself. To accomplish this, he works through both religious and secular authorities, moving them to the enforcement of human laws in defiance of the law of God. {GC 591.2}

Christ taught His disciples how to meet the deceptive work of Satan and his followers. Under a variety of symbols the Saviour presented the work of extending His kingdom of truth and righteousness throughout the world. It is by teaching the truth that we are to defeat the purposes of Satan. Christ illustrated this work in the parable of the sower. . . . {UL 77.4}

There is one safeguard against Satan's deceptions and snares, that is the truth as it is in Jesus. The truth planted in the heart, nourished by watchfulness and prayer, nourished by the grace of Christ, will give us discernment. The truth must abide in the heart, be felt in its power in spite of all the alluring enchantments of Satan, and your experience and mine must be that the truth can purify, guide, and bless the soul. . . . {TMK 301.4}

Popular theology represents the righteous dead as in heaven, entered into bliss and praising God with an immortal tongue; but Hezekiah could see no such glorious prospect in death. With his words agrees the testimony of the psalmist: "In death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?" "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." Psalm 6:5; 115:17. {GC 546.1}

Christ represents death as a sleep to His believing children. Their life is hid with Christ in God, and until the last trump shall sound those who die will sleep in Him. {FLB 175.5}

Many thought that Lazarus would have some wonderful experience to relate. They were surprised when he told them nothing. But Lazarus had nothing to tell. The pen of Inspiration has given light upon this subject. "The dead know not anything. ... Their love, and their hatred, ... is now perished" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6). {TDG 149.3}

The Life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection, and until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name. By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead (Letter 65a, 1894). {4BC 1143.5}

Christ is coming with power and great glory. He is coming with His own glory, and with the glory of the Father. And the holy angels will attend Him on His way. While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing. The unsullied light will shine from His splendor, and Christ the Redeemer will be admired by all who have served Him. While the wicked flee, Christ's followers will rejoice in His presence. {SD 357.3}

So in Israel, man's teaching had been put in the place of God's. Not only the things of nature, but the sacrificial service and the Scriptures themselves—all given to reveal God—were so perverted that they became the means of concealing Him. {COL 18.2}

Our trust must be wholly in God. He will be to us a present help in every time of need. Let us wait upon the Lord and exercise faith in His promises. He will hear us. Only believe. The Captain of our salvation will not leave us to guide our own bark. We shall have His help and His wisdom just when He sees we need it.—Letter 24, Dec. 18, 1882, to W. C. White. {TDG 361.6}

The character of God as revealed by Christ invites our faith and love, for we have a Father whose mercy and compassion fail not. At every step of our journey heavenward He will be with us to guide in every perplexity, to give us help in every temptation. {HP 16.4}

God has recorded many narratives in His Inspired Word to teach us that the human family is the object of the special care of heavenly angels. Man is not left to become the sport of Satan's temptations. All heaven is actively engaged in the work of communicating light to the inhabitants of the world, that they may not be left without spiritual guidance. An eye that never slumbers nor sleeps is guarding the camp of Israel. Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels are ministering to the needs of the children of men. Voices inspired by God are crying, This is the way, walk ye in it. If men will hear the voice of warning, if they will trust to God's guidance and not to finite judgment, they will be safe.... {HP 103.2}

When God gave His Son to the world, He made it possible for men and women to be perfect by the use of every capability of their beings to the glory of God. In Christ He gave to them the riches of His grace, and a knowledge of His will. As they would empty themselves of self, and learn to walk in humility, leaning on God for guidance, men would be enabled to fulfill God's high purpose for them. {AG 230.2}

To those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance, angels of God draw near. The Holy Spirit is given to open to them the rich treasures of the truth. {COL 59.3}

Battles are to be fought every day. A great warfare is going on over every soul, between the prince of darkness and the Prince of life. There is a great battle to be fought, . . . but you are not to do the main fighting here. As God's agent you are to yield yourselves to Him, that He may plan and direct and fight the battle for you, with your co-operation. The Prince of life is at the head of His work. He is to be with you in your daily battle with self, that you may be true to principle; that passion, when warring for the mastery, may be subdued by the grace of Christ; that you come off more than conqueror through Him that hath loved us. Jesus has been over the ground. He knows the power of every temptation. He knows just how to meet every emergency, and how to guide you through every path of danger. {SD 160.3}

He who has given His precious life because He loved you, and wanted you to be happy, will be a Captain who will always be mindful of your interest. {SD 160.4}

Though the Egyptians had so long rejected the knowledge of God, the Lord still gave them opportunity for repentance. In the days of Joseph, Egypt had been an asylum for Israel; God had been honored in the kindness shown His people; and now the long-suffering One, slow to anger, and full of compassion, gave each judgment time to do its work; the Egyptians, cursed through the very objects they had worshiped, had evidence of the power of Jehovah, and all who would, might submit to God and escape His judgments. The bigotry and stubbornness of the king resulted in spreading the knowledge of God, and bringing many of the Egyptians to give themselves to His service. {PP 333.2}

Those who walk even as Christ walked, who are patient, gentle, kind, meek and lowly in heart, those who yoke up with Christ and lift His burdens, who yearn for souls as He yearned for them—these will enter into the joy of their Lord. They will see with Christ the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Heaven will triumph, for the vacancies made in heaven by the fall of Satan and his angels will be filled by the redeemed of the Lord (RH May 29, 1900). {7BC 949.2}

Sanctification means habitual communion with God. There is nothing so great and powerful as God's love for those who are His children. {HP 129.5}

To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the

lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. {Mar 244.5}

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages, a perpetual testimony to the nature and terrible results of sin. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government and His law is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy intelligences, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its punishment. {4BC 1162.6}

After He had created our world and man, He looked upon the work that He had done, and pronounced it very good. And when the foundation of the earth was laid, the foundation of the Sabbath was laid also. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. In giving the Sabbath, God considered man's spiritual and physical health. {TM 136.1}

"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. The law reveals sin to us, and causes us to feel our need of Christ, and to flee unto Him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . {6BC 1110.3}

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. {6BC 1110.4}

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. {6BC 1110.5}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*
Lesson 11 “The Seal of God and Mark of the Beast: Part 1”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 14:12; Ephesians 2:8–10; Matthew 27:45–50; Revelation 13:15–17; Revelation 14:4; Luke 5:18–26.

Memory Text

“Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads’ ” (Revelation 7:2, 3, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Steadfast Endurance
- III. The Cosmic Struggle
- IV. Reaping What We Sow
- V. Those Who Follow the Lamb
- VI. Jesus: Our Only Mediator
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In this lesson, we will explore further the difference between how God operates and how the enemy of souls does. He usurps God’s authority, commands loyalty, and introduces a counterfeit system of worship through the use of force, coercion, and at times bribes and rewards—all in order to compel worship. In contrast, love is the great motivating force of the kingdom of God. God’s people find their greatest joy and highest delight in worshiping Him. They are committed to Him because they know how committed He is to them.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson looks at “steadfast endurance” from Revelation 14:12. After the announcement of the fate of those who reject worshiping God (vs. 9-11), John turns our attention to discuss four characteristics of those who worship God: they have

steadfast endurance; they are saints; commandment-keepers and have the faith of Jesus. But there is more to this text than law and gospel, obligation and promise.

3. Monday's lesson illustrates what "faith of Jesus" means by focusing on Jesus' death in Matthew 27:45-50. God has been revealed in the world through the witness of Jesus. What matters in this situation—the situation when the cosmic conflict comes to an end—is the perseverance of the saints. They hold on to the commandments of God as revealed by the "*faithfulness of Jesus*" (14:12). The attitude of his witnesses speaks of the constancy of God that was so clearly demonstrated in Jesus. That's what reflecting his name, his character, his seal represents.
4. Tuesday's lesson uses the principle of "reaping what we sow" (Galatians 6:7-9) to illustrate the fate of those who choose worshiping the beast over worshiping God. Satan works by misrepresentation (Genesis 3:4 cf. 2:17) and imitation, providing his alternative. The dragon tried to imitate the testimony of Jesus; he also deals in witnesses pretending to be killed with violence (Revelation 13:3). But it will not work. There is a telling difference between the two, the one who was killed with violence (5:6; 13:8) and the one who uses violence to kill (13:15; 18:24).
5. Wednesday's lesson contrasts those who follow the beast (13:3-5, 8) and those who follow the Lamb (14:1, 2). What cultural realities of today's world are universally "worshiped" without being questioned by the majority? What would a call to faithfulness and "following the Lamb" look like in today's world?
6. Thursday's lesson discusses the role of the mediator. First Timothy 2:5 teaches that there is one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ. What is the role of Jesus, if he himself said, "I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf, for the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God" (John 16:26-27)?
7. The false Trinity in Revelation 13 seeks to put its "mark" on "those who live on the earth." They achieve it partly by deception and partly by coercion. God responds in Revelation 14 in two ways. First, he warns people not to take the mark (14:9-11). Secondly, he puts forward his own mark (7:1-17; 14:1), "the seal of God." Revelation presents this as "the confrontation of signs". Two things should be said about these "marks." First, they are profoundly representative of the two sides of the cosmic conflict — the mark reflects the *name*. Second, the dragon's side is in the business of *imitation*. Thus, his "mark" must be, too. The result is that every person is either "sealed" or "marked" in the context of the eschatological crisis.
8. Because the divine command was *misrepresented* before it was *violated* (Genesis 2:17-3:4; Romans 7:7-13), God's making things right had to address the misrepresentation and not only the violation. Therefore, the third angel draws attention to "the commandments of God as explained by the faithfulness of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).
9. How do we, in our time and culture, model to the world in a positive way what God's name, character and putting things right represent?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Graham: The sealing is mentioned first in Revelation, then the mark of the beast. I think the mark of the beast, really a symbol of loyalty to the opposition, should be compared with the symbol of loyalty to God. **I believe that to receive the seal of God is to be so settled into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, that one cannot be moved. I believe that to receive the mark of the beast is to be so settled into the lie, and there are Scriptures that talk about the lie, preferring Satan's lies to the truth, you've substituted his lies for the truth. I believe to receive the mark of the beast is to be so settled into Satan's false picture of God that not even the Spirit of God could move us. We cannot be moved. So in essence, the seal or the mark represents an inner decision and commitment for eternity with respect to God.**

Lou: For those of us who have roots in Seventh-day Adventism, for example, the seal of God has been tied very closely to the Sabbath. In fact, I thought we had referred to the Sabbath as the seal of God in itself. But I hear you making a distinction there.

Graham: Well, one has to stop and realize that the people who crucified Christ kept the Seventh-day Sabbath scrupulously; very, very carefully. Did they have the seal of God? They certainly were not settled into the truth about God. When Jesus brought the truth about God, they said He had a devil, and they killed Him to silence His witness. On the other hand though, you remember the evening we talked about how the Sabbath sums up the good news about our God? I believe that the knowing, meaningful, intelligent, thoughtful observance of the seventh day as a reminder of all these great demonstrations of the truth about our God, could be an outward expression of an inward conviction and a settling into this truth about our God. The Seventh-day Sabbath beautifully fits this mark of identification of those who are committed to the truth about God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18 with Lou Venden, "God Waits for His Children to Grow Up" recorded June 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG>*

Lou: Seventh-day Adventists are notorious, or shall I say famous, or well-known, for emphasis upon the mark of the beast. It seems to be very important to the message. What is it? Would you say a bit more about that?

Graham: Well, since such dreadful things happen to those who have the mark, we had better know something about it. As you know, there are many, many different views. Fortunately, though, there will be opportunity next time, when we talk about Satan's final effort to deceive, to go into this in more detail. In the meantime though, earlier in the book of Revelation it talks about God's loyal people having a seal. It seems they have some mark of loyalty and trust. And I would make this comparable. There's some indication that they prefer Satan's lies to the truth. They have

accepted him, the false Christ, as their redeemer. So we need to look for something that would be an appropriate mark.

I'm very impressed with, among the many, many meanings, with the fact that if you go the *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which you'll find not just Seventh-day Adventists have done, many others too, the literal meaning is, "substitute for the Son of God," which is exactly what Satan has wanted to be, substitute for the Son of God. But I'm more intrigued with the fact that you can find the very number 666 back to the centuries and the millennia, connected with devil worship and other misrepresentations of the truth. The one thing sure, it is a mark of rejection of the truth, a preference for Satan's side and loyalty to him, whatever it is. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #16 with Lou Venden, "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>

Lou: There's another word in there: "Here is the patience of the saints." I remember some of the translations say, "Here is the endurance of the saints." And now this one has, "Patient endurance."

Graham: That's an interesting combination here. There are two words, one is "patience," you know, "I am patiently waiting for the Lord to come; don't disturb me." The actual Greek word here means, "remaining under," as if you were pushing something. You put your shoulder to the wheel, and you stay under, and you shove with all your might. That's the word here. "Endurance" is better. But the *New International* says, "This calls for patient endurance." That's really bridging them both.

Lou: That struck me that that would be comparable to our colloquial expression today, "hanging in there."

Graham: That's true.

Lou: Standing under.

Graham: And it's not going to be easy. It calls for endurance. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #16 with Lou Venden, "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>

So in imagination let's go to the cross, and watch Jesus die. Did He really die? The soldiers were surprised to find he was already dead. Crucifixion was a slow way of dying. Evidently something else had happened. Is it true that Jesus was dying the death of a sinner, to show us how the sinner really dies? Look at the next verse on our sheet, 2 Corinthians 5:21: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin" (RSV). He did die the death of a sinner. And what caused

Jesus to die? As you watch him dying on the cross, is God killing His Son? Is He torturing his Son to death? Is God pouring out His wrath on His Son; something the Bible so often pictures God doing toward sinners for whom there is no further hope?

Well, it all depends on the meaning of wrath. What is God's wrath? One of the clearest explanations in the whole Bible is in Romans 1, the next passage. And I wish we could read at least the whole first chapter. But look at these few verses; Romans 1:18, 24, 26, 28:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth . . . [and it is the truth about God in that whole section]. Therefore, God gave them up . . . For this reason God gave them up . . . And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up. (RSV)

Three times it states in Romans 1 that God's wrath is simply His turning away, in loving disappointment, from those who do not want Him anyway, thus leaving them to the inevitable and awful consequence of their own rebellious choice. Was Jesus given up? Look at Romans 4:25: ". . . Jesus our Lord, who was put to death [given up] for our trespasses" (RSV).

There is nothing in the Greek that says He was "put to death." It says what is in the brackets there. "Jesus our Lord, who was given up for our trespasses . . ." and it is exactly the same word as in Romans 1:24, 26, 28. And versions ought to leave them the same to show the point that Jesus died under the wrath of His Father. But look at the real meaning of God's wrath. And this was not new with Paul. It's all through the Old Testament; most dramatically in Hosea 11. Again, I wish we could read the whole chapter. Hosea 11 just verses 7 and 8: "My people are bent on turning away from me . . . but How, oh how can I give you up, Ephraim! How, oh how, can I hand you over Israel!" *Phillips*

Did Jesus understand that this is the experience He was passing through? Did Jesus know He was being given up as Hosea describes it? And Paul later in Romans 1 and 4? What did Jesus cry just before He died? "My God, my God, why are You beating Me up? Why are you torturing Me? Why are you killing Me?" No! "Why have you given Me up?" He knew.

We should have come earlier, though—to Gethsemane. For He began this awesome experience of demonstrating the truth about God's gracious but awful warning, that the wages of sin is death. We should have come to Gethsemane. And there Jesus fell to the ground dying. The angels were watching. Was God killing His Son in the Garden of Gethsemane, or did Jesus feel His unity with His Father breaking up? He began to feel the awesome loneliness of being given up. Had Jesus been left in the Garden of Gethsemane, and had died there, could you say that the Father had killed the Son? Now had He been a mere creature you wouldn't know; but the angels knew who Jesus was. They knew that He was God. And they knew the meaning of His words. I should have included the verse in John 10:18. Jesus said, "No one takes My life from Me. No one can. I lay it down of Myself. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to

take it up.” The angels knew that was the truth. And if Jesus died it was not because His Father had killed Him. The Father was giving Him up and both of them suffered, and the Father was crying, “How can I give you up?” The Son who had assumed humanity was the One who died. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, “The Most Costly and Convincing 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/8MMCAG>

I’m not so worried about the beast as I am about the dragon who gives his power to the beast, the one who is behind all the heads. Sometimes we act as if one of the heads is our great enemy. On the contrary. The devil has worked through every false religious system. And it is significant to note that every false religious system has a substitute for the Son of God in one form or another. In the mystery religions that were popular in the days of these early Christians who were hearing this, there were dying, rising saviors who counterfeited the true Christ. So this substituting for the Son of God has gone on from the very beginning. It began up in heaven when Lucifer wished to take the place of the other ‘Lucifer’ in the respect and reverence of the angels.

So if you prefer his side, and you are distinguished in some way as preferring that side, your faith is in him and your loyalty is to him, and you prefer his way of doing things, this is what will happen to you. You will drink the wine of God’s wrath. But we’ve been prepared for wrath for sixty-five books. What is the meaning of God’s wrath? In Hosea 11, in Romans 1, specifically in Romans 1:24, 26, and 28, God’s wrath. He is the Father of the people He is about to give up. So how does He feel? He sadly turns away in loving disappointment from those who prefer the other side. Think of preferring the leadership of the one who led in the torture of the Son of God. But these people prefer his way of doing things. What would God do to those who would rather worship the deceiver than the infinitely trustworthy One? Does He beat them up? or give them up? Remember Hosea 11, where God cries, “How can I give you up, how can I let you go?” We know that is the meaning of God’s wrath. {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)

Lou: You’ve talked about intercession, a mediator, as part of an emergency measure. Does that mean that we don’t need an advocate? First John, second chapter talks about, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Are you saying that we don’t need an advocate?

Graham: As I mentioned, if one is still afraid of God, the Bible says we have an advocate with the Father. However, knowing that we really don't need someone to intercede with the Father, do we still need an advocate? Well, if we only determined who it is that's really against us, then we would see why we need an advocate standing beside the Father, the Paraclete, called to His side to help. Satan is against us, the accuser of the brethren who accuses us day and night before God. Look in Zechariah 3, who is accusing Joshua the High Priest? Who is defending? In Job, who is accusing? Who is defending? So since we have an enemy, God's enemy is our enemy too. We need an advocate. We need someone to represent us. To God? No. He's our Friend as much as the Son and the Holy Spirit.

But our future neighbors and friends, the inhabitants of the universe, might not be too sure about us. And God doesn't ask them to accept His list of candidates. He doesn't run His universe that way. So He allows Satan to accuse, and has Jesus explain. If He can defend, He does. If He can't, He won't. And so it's very real to me that Jesus is in this role of advocate and intercessor defending His loyal children who may even be just babes in the truth. If they trust Him like the thief on the cross, Jesus can say, "Yes, he has a terrible record as the Devil has pointed out, but he has a new heart and a right spirit. I commend him as safe to save, even to live next door to." And his guardian angel heaves a big sigh of relief.

Lou: Not from God's wrath or anything like that, that He's protecting us.

Graham: No. So often, we've got the wrong enemy.

Lou: He made God the enemy.

Graham: Yes.

Lou: Exactly what the devil would like to have us think.

Graham: Exactly. The Father's not our foe. No. "If God can be for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #11 with Lou Venden, "God's Emergency Measures" recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/11MMCAG>

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel's Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 "God's Last Pleading with His Children" is available at:

<http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—"God's Last Pleading with His Children"

Further Study with Ellen White

By beholding Jesus as He is, the sinner is transformed and elevated to the very summit of dignity, even to a seat with Christ upon his throne. . . . {TMK 96.4}

The plan of redemption provides for every emergency and for every want of the soul. If it were deficient in any way, the sinner might find some excuse to plead for neglect of its terms, but the infinite God had a knowledge of every human necessity, and ample provision has been made to supply every need. . . . {TMK 96.5}

As God raised Christ from the dead, that He might bring life and immortality to light through the gospel, and thus save His people from their sins, so Christ has raised fallen human beings from spiritual death, quickening them with His life, filling their hearts with hope and joy (MS 89, 1903). {6BC 1115.13}

Every human being is the object of loving interest to Him who gave His life that He might bring men back to God. Souls guilty and helpless, liable to be destroyed by the arts and snares of Satan, are cared for as a shepherd cares for the sheep of his flock. {MH 162.1}

God's grace is ever working upon the human heart, and when it is received, the evidence of its reception will appear in the life and character of its recipient, for spiritual life will be seen developing from within. The grace of Christ in the heart will always promote spiritual life, and spiritual advancement will be made. {TMK 163.2}

God makes no requirement without making provision for its fulfillment. Through the grace of Christ we may accomplish everything that God requires. {COL 301.2}

It is God's pleasure and will that the blessings bestowed on man shall be given in perfect completeness. He has made provision that every difficulty may be overcome, every want supplied through the Holy Spirit. {7BC 932.5}

Where there is not only a belief in God's Word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. {AG 137.5}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to

doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

With the trusting faith of a little child, we are to come to our heavenly Father, telling Him of all our needs. He is always ready to pardon and help. The supply of divine wisdom is inexhaustible, and the Lord encourages us to draw largely from it. {3BC 1146.8}

God is ever seeking to instruct finite men that they may exercise faith in Him and trust themselves wholly in His hands. 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 too small for His attention (GCB Feb. 18, 1897). {3BC 1141.3}

But though the conflict is a ceaseless one, none are left to struggle alone. Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him. As His children draw near to Him for protection from evil, in pity and love He lifts up for them a standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands. {PK 570.4}

The Christian always has a strong helper in the Lord. The way of the Lord's helping we may not know; but this we do know: He will never fail those who put their trust in Him. {PK 576.1}

The Lord will not disappoint any who put their trust in Him. He will be first and last and best in everything to us. He will be a present help in every time of need. In these last days of service we shall ... be held, and led, and protected, by the power of Christ. {RY 112.1}

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. {DA 764.1}

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe. {DA 764.2}

God destroys no man. Every man who is destroyed will destroy himself. When a man stifles the admonitions of conscience, he sows the seeds of unbelief and these produce a sure harvest.... {OHC 26.4}

He was the teacher sent by God to instruct mankind. As one in whom all restorative power is found, Christ spoke of drawing all men unto Him, and of giving the life everlasting. In Him there is power to heal every physical and every spiritual disease. {LHU 167.5}

God does not control our minds without our consent; but every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they may find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who consent to enter into covenant with God are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. {MH 93.1}

In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. {DA 550.6}

Men have the power to quench the Spirit of God; the power of choosing is left with them. They are allowed freedom of action. {FLB 58.3}

It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance. {FLB 58.5}

It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. {SC 17.2}

No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. "Man turns from God, not God from him." Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. {MB 93.1}

Jesus began His work by breaking Satan's power over the suffering. He restored the sick to health, gave sight to the blind, and healed the lame, causing them to leap for joy and to glorify God. He restored to health those who had been infirm and bound by Satan's cruel power many years. With gracious words He comforted the weak, the trembling, and the desponding. The feeble, suffering ones whom Satan held in triumph, Jesus wrenched from his grasp, bringing to

them soundness of body and great joy and happiness. He raised the dead to life, and they glorified God for the mighty display of His power. He wrought mightily for all who believed on Him. {EW 159.3}

The Saviour was above all prejudice of nation or people; He was willing to extend the blessings and privileges of the Jews to all who would accept the light which He came to the world to bring. It caused Him great joy to behold even one soul reaching out to Him from the night of spiritual blindness. {5BC 1134.5}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 12 “The Seal of God and Mark of the Beast: Part 2”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 12:6, 14; Daniel 7:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4; Deuteronomy 6:8; Deuteronomy 11:18; Exodus 20:8–11.

Memory Text

“Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads’ ” (Revelation 7:2, 3, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Deadly Wound
- III. The Falling Away
- IV. Satan’s Final Strategy
- V. The Mark of the Beast
- VI. The Sabbath Test
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. How does the devil work by imitating God through the false Trinity in Revelation 13? Notice the “deadly wound” (13:3 cf. 5:6), its healing (13:3, 12, 14), the time period allotted to the beast’s activity (13:5), blasphemous activity (16:6), and the final outcome (13:7). What does it teach us about recognizing satanic powers at work? How is God’s activity different? (Sunday’s lesson)
2. Monday’s lesson focuses on the predicted “falling away” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 9-12) which was at work in Paul’s time and would flourish in later centuries. What can one do to avoid being swept away by this deception? (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)
3. What can we learn about Satan’s final strategy in Revelation 17:12-14? (Tuesday’s lesson) What is the role of this gathering (cf. 16:12-16)? Notice the close connection between the Lamb and his believing community (17:14). Here we learn the outcome

of the Armageddon war which was not clear in 16:13-16. Note the destruction by implosion from within (17:16-17), rather than by divine retribution.

4. Wednesday's lesson finally brings us to the mark of the beast (Rev 14:9; 13:16-17). Why is the "mark of the beast" placed either in the forehead or the hand, while the "seal of God" is placed only on the forehead? (3:12; 7:2-3; 22:4)
5. Already in Deuteronomy 6:8 when Moses told the Israelites to bind the commandments 'as symbols on your hands and bind them on your forehead', it was not intended to be taken literally. It was meant as a teaching tool to demonstrate the choice to internalize the commandments. Jesus and the New Testament authors are clear that the function of circumcision is not merely physical, but what it signifies on the heart (Romans 2:29).
6. The Gospel of John shows the risk of observing the Sabbath while separating it from its meaning (John 19:31). The day itself had achieved independent standing: the *day* had become more important than its *meaning*. Finally, there was no need to consider the *meaning*. Worse yet, it became the *right day* but the *wrong meaning*. That's why Jesus devoted a significant portion of his ministry to correcting the spirituality wrongly understood or pursued.
7. Based on Calvinist theology, the Sabbath has been seen through the centuries more as "the sign of God's *authority*". Thus, what was emphasized was the *authority-question* and the necessity of *obedience-response*. But is that the meaning of the Sabbath in the Bible?
8. Seen through the prism of God's character, the Sabbath is a sign of God's *commitment* more than a divine *commandment*. God's commitment is the primary biblical meaning. We see God's commitment in God's rest in Genesis (Gen 2:1-3) and in God's promise in Isaiah (Isa 56:1-8). We see it clearly in John, where the extent of God's commitment is demonstrated in conspicuous Sabbath healings (John 5:1-18; 9:1-41). This absurdity comes to a head precisely on the Passover Friday when Sabbath-observing Jews were rushing to put things in order so they could observe the Sabbath properly (John 19:31).
9. When, Revelation says, "God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them" (Revelation 21:3), it portrays Sabbath in the form of God's enduring commitment as a start of eternal Sabbath.
10. Classical Christianity argues that the Sabbath is changeable because it is arbitrary. Most Sabbath defenders concur that it is arbitrary, but they do not agree that it should be changed. But if the controversy between good and evil in the biblical narrative revolves around the question of whether God is arbitrary, it is difficult to appreciate how God will be vindicated from the charge that he is arbitrary under a symbol that proves God's arbitrariness. Moreover, if the alleged arbitrary feature of the Sabbath is made to be its most fundamental characteristic, it certainly leaves a residue of arbitrariness on God's reputation. By choosing this line of reasoning,

defenders of the Sabbath may be winning the battle for the Sabbath at the tremendous cost of losing the war concerning the character of God.

11. If the third angel's message is the 'eternal gospel' (like the first two messages), then it must be about God's character of love, undeserved grace and eternal commitment to his created children. And because of the finality of the outcome of this last battle, in his final pleading God uses such language to give his wayward children every chance to understand the critical and eternal significance of the choice they make. He wants to see his children saved, not deceived!
12. When preaching the third angel's message, how can we express this in a positive and motivating context, rather than denouncing people? When we deal with a future unfulfilled prophecy, how can we help people concentrate on God's character, rather than on a day? (John 13:19; 14:29)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

See quotes with lesson number 11.

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel's Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 "God's Last Pleading with His Children" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—"God's Last Pleading with His Children"

Further Study with Ellen White

God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make His purposes to fit circumstances, but He allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but He knew that such a condition would exist. The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven—this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages. And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity (ST March 25, 1897). {6BC 1082.3}

The purpose and plan of grace existed from all eternity. Before the foundation of the world it was according to the determinate counsel of God that man should be created, endowed with power to do the divine will. But the defection of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden

from the Omnipotent, and yet it did not deter him from carrying out his eternal purpose; for the Lord would establish his throne in righteousness. God knows the end from the beginning; “known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Therefore redemption was not an afterthought—a plan formulated after the fall of Adam—but an eternal purpose to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world but for the good of all the worlds which God has created. {ST, April 25, 1892 par. 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}

The enemy can never take out of the hand of Christ the one who is simply trusting in His promises. If the soul is trusting and working obediently, the mind is susceptible to divine impressions, and the light of God shines in, enlightening the understanding. What privileges we have in Christ Jesus! {SD 351.4}

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with; but let us not forget that the three great powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His promises to pass. He will gather from the world a people who will serve Him in righteousness. {8T 254.1}

Upon the banks of the river Chebar, Ezekiel beheld a whirlwind seeming to come from the north, “a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber.” A number of wheels, intersecting one another, were moved by four living beings. High above all these “was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.” “And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man’s hand under their wings.” Ezekiel 1:4, 26; 10:8. The wheels were so complicated in arrangement that at first sight they appeared to be in confusion; but they moved in perfect harmony. Heavenly beings, sustained and guided by the hand beneath the wings of the

cherubim, were impelling these wheels; above them, upon the sapphire throne, was the Eternal One; and round about the throne a rainbow, the emblem of divine mercy. {Ed 177.3}

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}

The animating Spirit of God, working through human agencies, leads the believers to be of one mind, one soul, unitedly loving God and keeping His commandments—preparing here below for translation (RH Oct. 13, 1904). {7BC 984.3}

The heavenly intelligences, angels that excel in strength, are waiting, obedient to His command, to unite with human agencies; and the Lord will interpose when matters have come to such a pass that none but a divine power can counteract the satanic agencies at work. When His people shall be in the greatest danger, seemingly unable to stand against the power of Satan, God will work in their behalf. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. {2SM 373.1}

There is a marked contrast between those who bear the seal of God and those who worship the beast and his image. The Lord's faithful servants will receive the bitterest persecution from false teachers, who will not hear the word of God, and who prepare stumbling blocks to put in the way of those who would hear. But God's people are not to fear. Satan cannot go beyond his limit. The Lord will be the defense of His people. {Mar 191.3}

Satan is at work from beneath to stir up the hellish powers of his confederacy of evil against the just. He imbues human agencies with his own attributes. Evil angels united with evil men will put forth efforts to harass, persecute, and destroy. But the Lord God of Israel will not forsake those who trust in Him. Amid the strengthening of infidelity and apostasy, amid the pretended illumination which is the blindest presumption and delusion, there will be a light from the sanctuary above shining upon God's people. The truth of God will triumph. {UL 262.2}

This world is a theater. The actors, the inhabitants of the world, are preparing to act their part in the last great drama. God is lost sight of. There is no unity of purpose, except as parties of men confederate to gain their ends. God is looking on. His purposes in regard to His rebellious subjects will be fulfilled. The world has not been given into the hands of men, though God is permitting the elements of confusion and disorder to bear sway for a season. (Letter 141, 1902). {6BC 1106.2}

Those who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people. {GC 517.2}

Had Eve refrained from entering into argument with the tempter, she would have been safe; but she ventured to parley with him and fell a victim to his wiles. It is thus that many are still overcome. They doubt and argue concerning the requirements of God; and instead of obeying the divine commands, they accept human theories, which but disguise the devices of Satan. {GC 531.2}

The Lord's angels are appointed to keep strict watch over those who put their faith in the Lord, and these angels are to be our special help in every time of need. Every day we are to come to the Lord with full assurance of faith, and to look to Him for wisdom. . . . Those who are guided by the Word of the Lord will discern with certainty between falsehood and truth, between sin and righteousness (MS 43, 1907). {7BC 907.1}

Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and claim the promises of God. Cherubim and seraphim, and angels that excel in strength, stand at God's right hand, "All ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."—AA 154. {TA 17.1}

You are not alone in the warfare against wrong. Could the curtain be rolled back, you would see heavenly angels fighting with you. This they must do; it is their work to guard the youth. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels minister to the youth.—YI Jan. 1, 1903. {TA 19.2}

God's faithful, praying ones are, as it were, shut in with Him. They themselves know not how securely they are shielded. Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could the eyes of God's children be opened as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see angels of God encamped about them, holding in check the hosts of darkness. {PK 590.3}

The cloud that was a wall of darkness to the Egyptians was to the Hebrews a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp, and shedding brightness upon the path before them. So the dealings of Providence bring to the unbelieving, darkness and despair, while to the trusting soul they are full of light and peace. The path where God leads the way may lie through the desert or the sea, but it is a safe path. {PP 290.3}

God is constantly seeking to draw men close under His protection, that Satan may not practice his cruel, deceptive power upon them. {PP 503.3}

The Sabbath and the family were alike instituted in Eden, and in God's purpose they are indissolubly linked together. On this day more than on any other, it is possible for us to live the life of Eden. . . . {Ed 250.2}

Determined to efface the image of God in man, Satan works with an intensity of effort to hide God from view. Not openly does he work, but secretly, mingling the human and the divine, the spurious and the genuine, so seeking to bring confusion and distress. But in proportionate power divine mercy is revealed to counteract this wicked working, and bring to light the enemy's hidden purposes. {TDG 308.5}

The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character (RH May 21, 1895). {7BC 970.3}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2023: *Three Cosmic Messages*

Lesson 13 “Ablaze With God’s Glory”

Read for this week’s study

1 Thessalonians 5:1–6; John 8:32; Revelation 18:1; Revelation 4:11; Exodus 33:18, 19; Revelation 5:6, 12; Revelation 13:8.

Memory Text

“After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory” (Revelation 18:1, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Preparing for the Final Crisis
- III. Knowing Truth
- IV. The Reformation Continues
- V. God’s Glory Fills the Earth
- VI. The Lamb, the Slain Lamb
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “God has raised up the Seventh-day Adventist Church to preach this [three angels’] message to the world. Thus, we need, ourselves, to be converted to the truth as it is in Jesus, and to have been transformed and made new by the ‘everlasting gospel’ of Revelation 14:6, which is centered on Christ’s death for us, the assurance of our salvation in Him.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson looks at ‘Preparing for the Final Crisis’ focusing on 1 Thessalonians 5:1–6. What is the significance of the ‘day of the Lord’? (Genesis 2:3 cf. 2:4) What are the ‘times and the seasons’? (Daniel 2:21; Acts 1:7) Paul uses the metaphor of ‘thief in the night’. Jesus also used that metaphor (Matthew 24:42-43; Luke 12:35-40 cf. Revelation 3:3; 16:15). If the believers are “in the know”, why does Paul need to make a correction in his second letter to the Thessalonians? (2:1-12) What does this teach us about suddenness, expectancy and surprise?

3. How do you understand Jesus' words that "the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32; 7:17; 17:17)? What does it mean that 'the truth shall set you free'? What does it mean to be "free" in this context?
4. "The message of the second angel appeals to us to accept truth rather than error, Scripture rather than tradition, and the teachings of God's Word rather than the errors of false doctrine." (Monday's lesson) If it is that simple, why is deception so prevalent (Revelation 13:3.8)?
5. What do we mean when we say that "the Reformation continues"? (Revelation 18:1; Tuesday's lesson) What is it that the reforms did and what still needs to be done? Ultimately, how do the issues in the last days come down to authority? Whose authority do we follow: God's, our own, the beast's, or someone else's? Upon reflection, whose authority are you following? How does God use his authority (Matthew 28:18-19)?
6. How is God's glory going to fill the earth? (See Revelation 4:11; 5:12; 18:1; 19:1; 21:26; Wednesday's lesson) How does God's revelation of his character to Moses (in Exodus 33:18, 19; 34:6, 7) help us to understand not only this, but also the context of three angels' messages (6T 19)?
7. What is the meaning of the symbolism of the Lamb, and why would it appear 28 times in the book of Revelation? (Thursday's lesson) When we are introduced to the heavenly scene with seals, we realize that we need a Revealer! (5:1-4) His role demonstrates that the Revealer himself is the main subject and not only an instrument of revelation. When he appears in the middle of the throne as the Lamb that was killed with violence (5:6), he is presented as the solution to the cosmic conflict (12:7-12).
8. So how does God make things right through the Lamb that was killed with violence? What is "an eternally valid message" about God, which truth was raised from the mud of misrepresentation by this Lamb? "What matters in this situation" — the situation when the cosmic conflict comes to an end — "is the perseverance of the believers, those who hold on to the commandments of God as revealed by the faithfulness of Jesus" (14:12)
9. What is the telling difference between the two, the Lamb who was killed with violence (5:6; 13:8) and the one who was pretending to be killed with violence (13:3) while he uses violence to kill (13:15; 18:24). "And in you" — in Babylon — "was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been killed with violence on earth" (Revelation 18:24). And the whole scenario ends with a vivid description of a harvest of grain and a harvest of grapes: "And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as the bridles of the horses, for a distance of about one thousand six hundred stadia." (14:20)
10. As we end 13 weeks of study of the three angels' messages, we can realize anew that God will use whatever it takes to warn us of the eternal consequences of our

moral choices. Because he loves us, he wants to see us saved and not deceived! (see Isaiah 14:12 cf. Revelation 22:16; compare with Genesis 2:9, 16, 17) Some choices have eternal consequences. How can this reality be understood and shared in the light of the loving character of our Creator and His big picture plans for us?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

That's all! All they argued about was God and his government, and what he wanted of his children. I believe the Great Controversy will end just as it began. The good news is the truth in the Great Controversy. The truth is the truth that needed to be known in the Great Controversy, and that is the truth about God. The errors, the opposition, they are all about God. And all the details are just reflections about this basic position that we take. Are we on God's side, or not, in the Great Controversy? Are we so settled into the truth about God "both intellectually and spiritually" that we could not be moved? Could you name anybody in the Bible other than the Lord himself, who was so settled into the truth about God, both intellectually he could talk about it, and spiritually he would stake his life on it, that he could not be moved? That's Job? That's what the whole book is about. And the three theologians came and said, "God is like this." He said, "He is not. He is like this. I can't make sense out of what is happening to me, but he could slay me and I'd still trust him." I believe Job was fully sealed and settled. If we were as settled as Job was, we'd be ready to pass through the time of trouble and the Lord could come.

But, you see, so often we are trying to settle people on all the other matters. If you settle people on the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the state of the dead, tithe, and health, without settling them on the truth about God they might keep the Sabbath as Jesus' enemies did. They might pay tithe as his enemies did. They might read the Bible as his enemies did. We could be developing in this campaign to win a million Adventists, we could, forbid the thought, develop a million enemies who faithfully keep the Sabbath, practice health reform, pay tithe, and read their Bibles. Now that is a horrible thought. But if we are not clear on the picture of God we might do well not to be in such a hurry. Have you read Ellen White's comment? "The Lord is not now working to bring many into the truth, because there are so many unconverted in the church." {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)

I understand that someday we will be able to stand in the presence of God and say: “God, we would do all these things from here on, whether You ever ask us to or not—because we agree with You that they are sensible and they are right.” And God could say, “That is good. At last you’re free. Now you have learned the truth and the truth will set and keep you free.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #12, “God’s Law Is No Threat to Our Freedom” recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>

Now Paul confessed with shame that formerly he had misrepresented God, even to the extent of believing Satan’s lies, so that he would use force and persecution, even stoning, to compel people to obey. But after Paul accepted the good news, he devoted the rest of his life to telling the truth. Who has written more eloquently about freedom, about love, and about trust, that all God asks of us is trust, that we are not under law, but under grace, and there is no need to be afraid of God? Paul had learned the truth about God that sets His children free.

You remember Jesus’ words in John 8:32: “You will know the truth [and with Jesus, it is always the truth about His Father. You will know the truth], and the truth will set you free” (*Williams*). You see, if God were the kind of person Satan has made Him out to be, there would be no freedom. There would only be the bondage of fear. But Paul had learned the truth and now he took it everywhere he could. He took it to the Galatians. And when he took the truth, he took freedom to them. He noticed they loved it at first. Then they turned away from it. “Oh,” he says, “stand fast in this freedom.” Look at Galatians 5:1: “This is the freedom with which Christ has made us free. So keep on standing in it, and stop letting your necks be fastened in the yoke of slavery again” (*Williams*).

Now there had been a day when Paul himself was satisfied with the obedience that resulted from law and fear. He thought it was the right thing to do. That was what the sovereign God preferred. But now Paul knows the good news. He knows the truth, and he realizes that God does not want the obedience that springs from law and fear. He wants the obedience of faith; the obedience that comes from free people who agree with God that this is the right thing to do. They agree so fully, they don’t even need to be told to do so. They do what is right because they agree it is right. {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>

What about the fire? How many times in the Bible, God's glory, the brilliance that surrounds His divine person, is described as having the appearance of fire. Look at Exodus 24:17: "Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain." (RSV)

It wasn't devouring fire. It looked like it. There are many other places in Scripture where we find this glory that surrounds our God is life-giving glory. Adam and Eve could live in it. Lucifer used to, as he walked among the stones of fire. It is energizing, life-giving. It is only because we are, by our own choice, out of harmony with God that what should be life-giving is destructive. God would heal us and doesn't want to lose a one.

Someday, every one of us will come face-to-face with God. Whether we are saved or lost, at either the second coming or at the third coming. Do you think we will be afraid? Do you anticipate being afraid? What if we should be among the lost? We would look up and see Christ there in His human form. Would He be angry with us? Or will He be crying, "Why will you die? How can I give you up? How can I let you go?" Like a physician, God is there, eager and ready to heal. But He cannot force us to be well. If we do not trust Him, if we are not willing to listen, He cannot heal the damage done. What else can God do if we have come to the place where we persistently have resisted and rejected His offers and refused to listen? If we have refused to trust, we have refused to let Him help us, what else can He do but sadly give us up, as He gave up His Son, and we will die? But even then there is no need to be afraid of God Himself.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #9, "There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God" 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/9MMCAG>

Lou: In your presentation this evening it seems clear that you are convinced that we need to be attentive to all ten of the commandments. But isn't a person, you've mentioned the word "legalist" here, isn't a person who is concerned about the law, who is even thinking about the Ten Commandments, isn't such a person a legalist? Isn't that the meaning of legalism? A person who thinks about the law? Shouldn't we be thinking about Jesus rather than about the law?

Graham: It's interesting when you think of the fact that to obey the law is to love. This suggests that the loving person is the legalist. And that doesn't seem to make sense. But I think on a broader basis one needs to consider the real meaning of legalism. Currently, my best understanding of the meaning of legalism is this: I believe that the essence of legalism is preoccupation with our legal standing with a legal, legalistic God. And so many Christians are preoccupied with their legal standing, because they don't really know God. They don't realize that He is a gracious God who is not preoccupied with our legal standing. Like the father of the prodigal son, He's very preoccupied with our welfare and whether or not we will come home. That's what

God is preoccupied with. So unfortunately, the word “legalism” is often misused, so I will repeat it.
The essence of legalism is preoccupation with one’s legal standing with God.

Lou: Well now, Graham let me ask you this: Could a person believe and accept, for instance, Christ’s sacrifice in his or her place in such a way—could he or she think of that in such a way that they would in effect be a legalist?

Graham: Yes, this is something to say very carefully, but I really believe that’s true. If you believe Jesus died primarily to adjust our legal standing with a God who is preoccupied with our legal standing, you are a legalist. And this means that you no longer take the blood of bulls and goats to God to adjust your legal standing—and I’d want to say this very reverently—you now take Him the blood of His son and say, “Will this adjust my legal standing?” He would say, “That’s good; now, you’ve brought Me the right blood.” This is legalism.

Lou: So you’re saying that if the purpose of our idea or our experience of salvation is meeting a legal requirement or it satisfies a legal requirement, it becomes a matter of legalism.

Graham: That’s the Devil’s sad perversion. He has actually taken the death of Christ, which is a monument to freedom and suggests that God is not preoccupied with our legal standing; he has turned that into just another ceremony to adjust legal standing. In other words, those who misunderstood the ceremonies in Old Testament times, but then became Christians, applied the same misunderstanding to the cross and to the blood of Christ. It’s just that now they have better blood and more persuasiveness with the Father to adjust their legal standing. It sounds terrible to say that.

Lou: It seems to me that you have opened the idea of the meaning and the problem of legalism to a much broader perspective, a very important perspective. You give us something to think about.

Graham: It supports the Devil’s charges that God is arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. See, all legalism is based on the conception that God has to execute those who disobey Him. Therefore, it follows that forgiveness will take care of it. That’s what produces legalism.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #12, “God’s Law Is No Threat to Our Freedom” recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the Three Angel’s Messages is available at: <http://pkp.cc/MM3ANGELSM>

Conversations About God #16 “God’s Last Pleading with His Children” is available at: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

Conversations About God #19 “How Soon Will the Conflict Be Over?” is available at:

<http://pkp.cc/19MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Conversations about God Chapter 16—“God’s Last Pleading with His Children”

Conversations about God Chapter 19—“How Soon Will the Conflict Be Over?”

Further Study with Ellen White

The message of Christ’s righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel. {6T 19.1}

What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself.—*Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers* (Series A, No. 9, 1897), pages 61, 62. {TM 456.3}

[T]he message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, . . . in verity.”—*Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890. {Ev 190.3}

Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand. {GC 612.1}

The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord’s side. {GC 612.2}

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn

aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. . . . {CC 250.3}

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 this earth. {PK 536.1}

The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy beings, all waiting to do His will. Through these messengers He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men. {MH 417.2}

We cannot always readily detect the working of Satan; we do not know where he lays his traps. But Jesus understands the subtle arts of the enemy, and He can keep our feet in safe paths. . . . “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) Christ declares. {OHC 16.3}

The means by which we can overcome the wicked one is that by which Christ overcame,—the power of the word. God does not control our minds without our consent; but if we desire to know and to do His will, His promises are ours: “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” “If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.” John 8:32; 7:17, R. V. Through faith in these promises, every man may be delivered from the snares of error and the control of sin. {DA 258.5}

Let us draw nearer and nearer to the pure light of Heaven, remembering that divine illumination will increase according to our onward movements, qualifying us to meet new responsibilities and emergencies. The path of the just is progressive, from strength to strength, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory. {HP 105.5}

The Holy Spirit brings the saving truths of the Scriptures within the comprehension of all who desire to know and do the will of God. Uneducated minds are enabled to grasp the most sublime and soul-stirring themes that can engage the attention of men—themes that will be the study and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. {TMK 192.4}

All who come to Christ for a clearer knowledge of the truth will receive it. He will unfold to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and these mysteries will be understood by the heart that longs to know the truth. A heavenly light will shine into the soul temple and will be revealed to others as the bright shining of a lamp on a dark path. {TMK 205.6}

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. Satan lives, and is active, and

every day we need to cry earnestly to God for help and strength to resist him. As long as Satan reigns we shall have self to subdue, besetments to overcome, and there is no stopping place, there is no point to which we can come and say we have fully attained. {1T 340.2}

God is the author of all truth; and truth practiced prepares the way for more advanced truth. When God's delegated servants proclaim fresh truth, the Holy Spirit moves upon the mind which has been prepared by walking in the light, quickening the perceptive faculties to discern the beauty and majesty of truth. {TM 378.1}

The words of truth will grow in importance, and assume a breadth and fullness of meaning of which we have never dreamed. The beauty and riches of the word have a transforming influence on mind and character. The light of heavenly love will fall upon the heart as an inspiration. {COL 132.4}

The appreciation of the Bible grows with its study. Whichever way the student may turn, he will find displayed the infinite wisdom and love of God. {COL 132.5}

The words, "A new heart also will I give you" (Ezekiel 36:26), mean, A new mind will I give you. This change of heart is always attended by a clear conception of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. The clearness of our view of truth will be proportionate to our understanding of the word of God. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher plane of intelligence. {CT 452.3}

All who come to Christ for a clearer knowledge of the truth will receive it. He will unfold to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and these mysteries will be understood by the heart that longs to know the truth. A heavenly light will shine into the soul temple, and will be revealed to others as the bright shining of a lamp on a dark path. {COL 35.3}

God is the author of truth. He enlightens the darkened understanding and gives to the human mind power to grasp and comprehend the truths which He has revealed. {SL 49.1}

The truth if received is capable of constant expansion and new developments. It will increase in brightness as we behold it, and grow in height and depth as we aspire to grasp it. Thus it will elevate us to the standard of perfection, and give us faith and trust in God as our strength for the work before us (MS 153, 1898). {5BC 1147.3}

The evidence of the truth of God's word is in the word itself. Scripture is the key that unlocks scripture. The deep meaning of the truths of God's word is unfolded to our minds by His Spirit. {8T 157.1}

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}

Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

It is God's glory to encircle sinful, repentant human beings in the arms of His love, to bind up their wounds, to cleanse them from sin, and to clothe them with the garments of salvation. {PK 668.3}

God is the author of truth. He enlightens the darkened understanding and gives to the human mind power to grasp and comprehend the truths which He has revealed. {SL 49.1}

The deep necessity of man for a divine teacher was known in heaven. The pity and sympathy of God were exercised in behalf of man, fallen and bound to Satan's chariot-car; and when the fullness of time was come, He sent forth His Son. The One appointed in the counsels of heaven came to the earth as an instructor. He was no less a being than the Creator of the world, the Son of the Infinite God. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world; and to meet the necessities of humanity, He took on Him human nature. To the astonishment of the heavenly host, He walked this earth as the Eternal Word. Fully prepared, He left the royal courts to come to a world marred and polluted with sin. Mysteriously He allied Himself to human nature. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." God's excess of goodness, benevolence, and love was a surprise to the world, of grace which could be realized, but not told. {FE 399.4}

It is Satan's work to fill men's hearts with doubt. He leads them to look upon God as a stern judge. He tempts them to sin, and then to regard themselves as too vile to approach their heavenly Father or to excite His pity. The Lord understands all this. Jesus assures His disciples of God's sympathy for them in their needs and weaknesses. Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father's heart. {DA 356.2}

Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. There will be no more tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying: . . . for the former things are passed away." "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 33:24. {GC 676.1}

"I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Revelation 21:22. The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. Now we "see through a glass, darkly." 1 Corinthians 13:12. We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence and gaze upon the glory of His countenance. {SR 432.1}

There immortal minds will study with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There is no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. {SR 432.2}

And as the years of eternity roll, they will bring richer and more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed beat with a stronger devotion, and they sweep the harps of gold with a firmer hand: and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise. {SR 432.3}

There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul. {Ed 307.4}

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. We shall share the treasures gained through ages upon ages spent in contemplation of God's handiwork. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations. "Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20) will be, forever and forever, the impartation of the gifts of God. {Ed 307.5}