

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*

Lesson 1 “How to Read the Psalms”

Read for this week’s study

1 Chronicles 16:7; Nehemiah 12:8; Psalm 25:1–5; Psalm 33:1–3; Romans 8:26, 27; Psalm 82:8; Psalm 121:7.

Memory Text

“Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (Luke 24:44, 45, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Psalms in Ancient Israel’s Worship
- III. Meet the Psalmists
- IV. A Song for Every Season
- V. Inspired Prayers
- VI. The World of the Psalms
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The Bible is a book of many genres. It is full of stories, poems, songs, jokes, riddles, prophecies, and word plays, there are lots of puns, especially in the Hebrew. Scholars have said that in the Old Testament prophets, God almost always speaks in poetry. There is evidence that the Aramaic of what Jesus says in the Gospels is often poetic as well. What does all this tell us about God? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. The word “Psalms” is from the Greek Old Testament (*psalmoi*). The main purpose of the Psalms were to praise God. They were written in Hebrew poetry by different authors from the ancient world, so the Psalms reflect the situations and the literary styles of their time. What does that tell us about the way that God chooses to reveal Himself to us? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)

3. From your previous reading and study, what are some of the different kinds of psalms you find in the Bible? (Sunday's Lesson)
4. Who wrote the Psalms? See Psalm 8:1; 42:1; 75:1; 89:1; 90:1. What are some of the human emotions expressed in the Psalms? Do you find the fact that many of the Psalmists express the same kinds of struggles we experience today encouraging or discouraging? (Monday's Lesson)
5. What different types of psalms have you noticed? Do an internet search for the characteristics of Hebrew poetry. Hebrew poetry isn't based on rhyme, so what is it that makes Hebrew poetry poetry? (Tuesday's Lesson)
6. Many of the psalms in the Bible are not found in the book of that name. Read 2 Samuel 23:1-4. What does this tell us about songs and prayers in the Bible? What does it tell us about God? What does Romans 8:26-27 tell us about prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit? (Wednesday's Lesson)
7. The world of the Psalms is totally God-centered. The psalmists sought to submit all life experiences, positive, negative, happy, and sad, to God in prayer. That means in a real sense, the psalms are worship from beginning to end. That was true for individual Israelites and for the community as a whole. All of Israel's experience was meant to be a form of worship. God was understood to be both far and near, everywhere at once, yet located in the temple, hidden, yet disclosed. Why do you think the Bible so often portrays God in terms of paradoxes and tensions between opposites? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. Most of the Psalms are associated with the time of David and the early monarchy. But the collection continued to grow after that time and may have been placed in the form we know today by Ezra, around 450 BC. See Ezra 7:6-10. These would have been collected in service of the new temple that had been established after the return from Babylonian Exile.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now let's go to the Psalms. Is it clear who wrote all these hymns and prayers? It's not only David, is it? A number of other individuals are mentioned. Even one is by Moses, the ninetieth Psalm, with the memorable words: "Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." It's obvious that we're reading verse here, that poets are at work. Though in Hebrew poetry you don't see a rhyme between the lines. What you see is parallelism. Sometimes there's even a third line that repeats the thought of the first one. Often the second line will clarify the thought in the first one.

When poets write, they are sometimes very dramatic. They express emotions very strongly. There's a lot of feeling, and so how literally should we take some of these verses? For example, Psalm 6:6, where he says: "I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears;

I drench my couch with my weeping. My eye wastes away because of grief, it grows weak because of all my foes.”

Do you think he really soaked it every night? Well, that’s the way poets picture things. The point, though, isn’t obscure about it. He was feeling very upset, very depressed, very discouraged, and he wept as he thought of his problem. We have a hymn that talks about “a worm such as I”. Do you always feel like a worm? When you have just received the best news in your life on your way to church and the hymn is about “a worm such as I”, you’ve never felt so good in your life. It pays to know the background of these hymns. Mr. Hammond, organist at La Sierra for so many years, has written another book on the background of hymns, and it’s well worth reading. And when you know the experience of the one who wrote the hymn, you can understand why he or she wrote that way.

Now some of our hymns don’t really bear too much theological analysis. Oh, you know the one about prayer we often have? “I’ll sing while passing through the air, farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer.” And if prayer is conversation with God as with a friend, as demonstrated in the Psalms, would you sing while passing through the air, “God, I’ll never speak to You again”? We’re just on our way to talk to Him face to face. Well, one has to understand what was meant, that that would be the end of praying to an unseen person or praying formally. And yet even prayer on this planet is supposed to be conversation with God as with a friend. So if you understand prayer that way, how could you sing, “Farewell, farewell, sweet conversation with God as with a friend”? So whoever wrote that had some other conception of prayer. Even that highly emotional and very sentimental song, “I come to the Garden alone, and He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own,” and some men find that altogether too sentimental to sing. Until you read the story of the one who wrote it, a person who felt very warm, very close to God at the time and expressed it this way. And when people are expressing their feelings, that’s a highly individual matter, isn’t it? We have to leave them free to do it their way and make lots of allowances for it. However, when people are expressing their feelings, one had better hear them through, because a person might express extreme depression for a little while and then say, “However, I’ve thought this through.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Psalms*, recorded January 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/27MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/28MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. Thus faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. {DA 348.2}

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}

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. The eye of faith will discern God very near, and the suppliant may obtain precious evidence of the divine love and care for him. {GW 257.1}

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}

Never are we absent from the mind of God. God is our joy and our salvation. {3SM 338.1}

The Lord is our helper, our defense. God has provided that no soul that trusts in Him shall be overcome by the enemy. {CTr 47.4}

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and his teaching in our past history. {RH, October 12, 1905 par. 22}

Prayer is a heaven-ordained means of success. Appeals, petitions, entreaties, between man and man, move men and act a part in controlling the affairs of nations. But prayer moves heaven. That power alone that comes in answer to prayer will make men wise in the wisdom of heaven and enable them to work in the unity of the Spirit, joined together by the bonds of peace. {HP 75.6}

Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God. {SC 97.2}

[T]he prayer that comes from an earnest heart, when the simple wants of the soul are expressed just as we would ask an earthly friend for a favor, expecting that it would be granted—this is the prayer of faith. {ML 19.2}

In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but God's can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hidden desires and longings to the Father of infinite pity, and in the hush and silence of the soul that voice which never fails to answer the cry of human need will speak to our hearts. {Pr 182.6}

We may utter words that reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe. We may speak with Jesus as we walk by the way, and He says, I am at thy right hand. [See Psalm 16:8.] {GW 258.1}

Divine wisdom will order the steps of those who put their trust in the Lord. Divine love will encircle them, and they will realize the presence of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. {OHC 324.6}

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

Our God is an ever-present help in every time of need. He is perfectly acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our heart, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distress, He is making arrangements for our deliverance. Our sorrow is not unnoticed. He always knows much better than we do, just what is necessary for the good of His children, and He leads us as we would choose to be led if we could discern our own hearts and see our necessities and perils, as God sees them. But finite beings seldom know themselves. They do not understand their own weakness. . . . God knows them better than they know themselves, and He understands how to lead them. . . . {OHC 316.4}

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. May the Lord bless and strengthen you, that your last days may be your best days, fragrant with the softening, subduing influence of His love. The Lord bless and keep you and give you repose in His love, is my most earnest desire for you, my brother. - TSB 31-33 (Letter 70, 1898). {RY 112.1}

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

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. {SC 93.2}

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. 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}

It is the greatest joy of the angels of heaven to spread the shield of their tender love over souls who turn to God. {OHC 92.6}

How precious are these assurances that we shall never be left to take one step in our own finite strength, for He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5. We are fighting in the presence of invisible hosts. Unseen intelligences survey the whole array of evil, and help is at hand. We shall not only be provided with that which is necessary but shall be placed upon vantage ground. . . . {OHC 311.4}

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Lesson 2 “Teach Us to Pray”

Read for this week’s study

Psalms 105:5; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13; Psalm 44; Psalm 22; Psalm 13; Psalm 60:1–5.

Memory Text

“Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples’” (Luke 11:1, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Fostering the Use of the Psalms in Prayer
- III. Trust in Times of Trouble
- IV. A Psalm of Despair
- V. From Despair to Hope
- VI. Oh, Restore Us Again
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. There is a sense in which the book of Psalms is as much a prayer book as a hymn book. This lesson focuses particularly on prayers that occur in the context of difficult or challenging times. Psalms were often written to help the psalmist process adverse situations. They can help us process similar situations in our own lives. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. What reading strategies have you found helpful in relation to the Psalms? Read Psalm 105:5, Colossians 3:16 and James 5:13. How do these texts suggest we relate to God? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Read Psalm 44. What does this psalm say that is relevant to believers today? What does the fact that psalms like this are rarely read in church say about us? What does the inclusion of psalms like this tell us about God? Can trials and difficulties draw you closer to God? Can trials and difficulties drive you further away from God? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Psalm 22. What can we learn from this psalm about trust in God amid great suffering? What difference does it make that Jesus could utter to God the darkest verse in this psalm on the cross? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Psalm 13. What are some of the major moods that the psalmist experiences, as evidenced in this text? What brought about the major change in the psalmist's general outlook? What do you think of Ellen White's advice for times like this? "When temptations assail you, when care perplexity and darkness seem to surround your soul, look to the place where you last saw the light." MH 250. (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Psalm 60:1-5. On what occasions do you think this psalm would make a suitable prayer? How can we benefit from psalms of lament even in the joyous seasons of life? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. How can one's personal prayer life be benefited by written prayers, like those of the psalms and the great prayer books of the Protestant tradition? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

So now, imagine that the Father appears visibly among us here at Loma Linda this evening. How would we speak to Him? Or to make it more personal, let us say that He is willing to meet us in the fellowship room. As many of us as could, would go over there and gather around Him, just as the crowds did around Jesus; and Mary loved to sit there at His feet. Supposing we should have the inestimable privilege of talking there freely with God the Father for a whole hour. Would it be appropriate at the end for someone among us to arise and say, "This has been such a special occasion, don't you think we ought to close this meeting with a word of prayer?" Or would it be correct to understand that talking, conversing, having conversation with our God as with a friend for that whole hour actually is real prayer, and we have been praying the whole hour long?

Now God is seated there and we are gathered around Him. What should we say? Should we be the first to speak? Once we have started speaking, would we talk all the time? Or would we let God speak for a while? Normally, when we pray we do all the talking, don't we? And then we say "Amen" and go about our business, or go to sleep. It would be like meeting in the room with our heavenly Father, and talking to Him incessantly for several minutes, and then saying,

“Amen, thank You very much,” and then going home. It wouldn’t make sense, would it? It certainly wouldn’t be conversation as with a friend.

Conversation means at least two people speaking. But how do we converse with God when we can’t see Him just now, because of the present emergency? We all understand that emergency and why in mercy He does not reveal Himself visibly to us at this moment. And so, the Bible is called the Word of God—God speaking to us. If we wish to hear God speak, except in most extraordinary occasions, God speaks to us through the Bible. We speak to Him in prayer. Truly, as someone has said, “We commune with God through the study of the Scriptures.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15, “Talking to God as a Friend” 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/15MMCAG>*

That brings up the fundamental principle of interpretation, which we must use throughout the rest of our conversation, the principle of context. It was the context, it was the setting, that determined the meaning of a passage when it was originally written. To the extent that we can recreate and recover that original setting we are in a position to recover the original meaning.

When Paul says, “I wish you could be as I am. It’s all right to marry if you must, but I wish you could be as I am,” does that mean that all of us are second class saints if we’re married? No, put it in its context. Why did he say, “I would not allow a woman to speak in church”? And why does the Old Testament say, “You cannot boil a kid in its mother’s milk”? And then you turn to Judges. That is a stirring time every trip through the Bible. And you read about Samson, filled with the Spirit, killing a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass. You read about that fat king and the dagger that was thrust into him. And the dreadful story of the Levite and his Concubine.

I brought with me the worst illustration I have ever seen of reading the Bible the wrong way. It is called *The Bible Unmasked*. A man who’s avowed purpose was to destroy confidence in the Bible and in God, collected every unpleasant story of immorality and cruelty in the Bible and laid them end to end with the preface, “Would you mothers let your children read this sort of thing?” I brought my more modest printing. I have a later edition that has line drawings in it. I mentioned this in class up at Pacific Union College more than thirty years ago and a student, his name was Winn Paulie, came back with the best answer I have ever heard in all these years. “If you took the medical counselor book and cut out all the pictures of disease; cancer of the lip and tongue, etc., and all the symptoms of disease and printed them all by themselves, it would be a useless, repulsive publication. The only justification for printing those things is that they are always presented in the setting of the remedy.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio

series, Conversations About God, #6, “Evaluating the Evidence” recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/6MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

Yet notwithstanding the perversity of those who leaned toward idolatrous practices, God in mercy would do everything in His power to save the divided kingdom from utter ruin. And as the years rolled on and His purpose concerning Israel seemed to be utterly thwarted by the devices of men inspired by satanic agencies, He still manifested His beneficent designs through the captivity and restoration of the chosen nation. {PK 96.2}

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}

We are to follow Christ day by day. God does not bestow help for tomorrow. He does not give His children all the directions for their life journey at once, lest they should become confused. He tells them just as much as they can remember and perform. The strength and wisdom imparted are for the present emergency. “If any of you lack wisdom,”—for today,—“let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James 1:5. {DA 313.4}

In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, have faith in God. He is working out His will, doing all things well in behalf of His people. The strength of those who love and serve Him will be renewed day by day. {MH 482.1}

He is able and willing to bestow upon His servants all the help they need. He will give them the wisdom which their varied necessities demand. {MH 482.2}

Heaven has a never-failing supply of help for all who are needy. {OHC 117.4}

That prayer of Christ embraces all His followers to the close of time. Our Saviour foresaw the trials and dangers of His people; He is not unmindful of the dissensions and divisions that distract and weaken His church. He is looking upon us with deeper interest and more tender compassion than moves an earthly parent’s heart toward a wayward, afflicted child. He bids us learn of Him. He invites our confidence. He bids us open our hearts to receive His love. He has pledged Himself to be our helper. {5T 237.2}

We know that in sadness and grief we feel very frail, but we know that Jesus is right by our side to sympathize with us, and He will help us. We can commune with our best Friend; He is right by our side. We need not go into the heavens to bring Him down, for He is right by us to help us. {CTr 42.4}

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}

It is when we come into difficult places that He reveals His power and wisdom in answer to humble prayer. Have confidence in Him as a prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God. He will reveal Himself to you as One who can help in every emergency. He who created man, who gave him his wonderful physical, mental, and spiritual faculties, will not withhold that which is necessary to sustain the life He has given. He who has given us His word—the leaves of the tree of life—will not withhold from us a knowledge of how to provide food for His needy children. {MH 199.4}

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}

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}

God asks us to live only one day at a time. You need not look a week or a month ahead. *Today* do your best. Today speak and act in a way that will honor God. The promise is, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deuteronomy 33:25). {HP 59.6}

We can but look onward to new perplexities in the coming conflict, but we may well look on what is past as well as what is to come, and say, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12). “As thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deuteronomy 33:25). The trial will not exceed the strength which shall be given us to bear it. {TDG 58.3}

The way to the throne of God is always open. You cannot always be on your knees in prayer, but your silent petitions may constantly ascend to God for strength and guidance. When tempted, as you will be, you may flee to the secret place of the Most High. His everlasting arms will be underneath you. {CH 362.2}

God's everlasting arm encircles the soul that turns to Him for aid, however feeble that soul may be. {4T 328.1}

God has the world in His hand. We have God on our side. All heaven is waiting and longing for our cooperation. The Lord is supreme. Why then should we fear? The Lord is almighty; why should we tremble? In the past God has delivered His people, and He will be our helper if we will arise in His strength and go forward. {TMK 342.3}

We are to live only one day at a time. We do not have to do the work of a lifetime in a few hours. We need not look into the future with anxiety; for God has made it possible for us to be overcomers every day. {FLB 249.4}

Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be open for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon your Burden Bearer. {MH 72.1}

Circumstances may separate friends; the restless waters of the wide sea may roll between us and them. But no circumstances, no distance, can separate us from the Saviour. Wherever we may be, He is at our right hand, to support, maintain, uphold, and cheer. Greater than the love of a mother for her child is Christ's love for His redeemed. It is our privilege to rest in His love, to say, "I will trust Him; for He gave His life for me." {MH 72.2}

Human love may change, but Christ's love knows no change. {MH 72.3}

Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father's heart. {AG 189.5}

To all who are reaching out to feel the guiding hand of God, the moment of greatest discouragement is the time when divine help is nearest. . . . From every temptation and every trial He will bring them forth with firmer faith and a richer experience. {SD 92.5}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*

Lesson 3 “The Lord Reigns”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 8; Psalm 100; Psalm 97; Psalm 75; Psalm 105:7–10; Galatians 3:26–29; Psalm 25:10.

Memory Text

“The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength; indeed, the world is established, firm and secure” (Psalm 93:1, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Lord Has Made Us
- III. The Lord Reigns
- IV. God Is the Judge
- V. Ever Mindful of His Covenant
- VI. Your Testimonies Are Very Sure
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. A major theme of the Psalms is the idea that God is the sole and ultimate ruler of the universe. If you believe God is everything that we see in Jesus, this belief provides great security and confidence in the future. It is no wonder that the psalmists served God with undivided devotion. Having said that, what picture of God would leave a person very insecure? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. There are six major views of God in the world: 1) Naturalism, 2) Pantheism, 3) Deism, 4) Deterministic Theism, 5) Appeasement Theism, and 6) Benevolent Theism. The view that you take to a large degree determines how you view God’s power and, therefore, whether or not your view of God results in security or fear. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
3. Read Psalm 8. How do you reconcile the contrast between the view of humanity in verses 3-4 and that of 5-6? How is God portrayed in this psalm? (Sunday’s Lesson)
4. Read Psalm 100. Many of the peoples surrounding Israel believed in nature gods (appeasement theism). How does this psalm view that perspective? What are the

- implications of the idea that God is both great and good? How do you reconcile the tension between those two concepts? (Sunday's Lesson)
5. Read Psalm 97. What is God's reign like? How far does His domain extend? Why should our love for God cause us to hate evil? How are these two concepts related? (Monday's Lesson)
 6. Read Psalm 75. Why is the boasting of the wicked in vain? Read Psalm 96:10-13. The psalms invite people to rejoice in anticipation of God's judgments. In what way are the judgments of God good news? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 7. How can people have peace with God and assurance of salvation at the time of judgment? See Psalm 94:14 and Daniel 7:22. How is it that the promises to Israel apply to the church? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 8. Read Psalm 19:7. According to the psalmist, God's supreme rulership is exercised through His laws or "testimonies". Why does the psalmist suggest that following God's laws is the best way to live? (Thursday's Lesson)
 9. How does the Great Controversy theme help us to understand why there is so much turmoil and suffering in this world? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

How would it be possible to face such a judgment at the hands of Someone so well informed and be unafraid? Well, unafraid of what and unafraid of whom? The same John who warned us in that first angel's message that the hour of the judgment has come, is the one who explains how it is possible to face the judgment without fear. Look at the next passage, 1 John 4:16-18:

God is love, and whoever lives in love lives in union with God and God lives in union with him. Love is made perfect in us in order that we may have courage on the Judgment Day. . . . There is no fear in love [now that is not the word reverence this time. It is terror. There is no fear in love.]; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment. (GNT)

So John's point is surely crystal clear. That if we really know the truth about God and if we like what we know, then there is no need to be afraid even of the final judgment. Or is this only speaking of gentle Jesus, the Son? Some derive comfort from the thought and the fact, as the Bible says, that God has given all judgment to the Son. Look at John 5:22: "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son." (RSV) And many find that much more comforting, because you are much more likely to receive merciful treatment at the hand of the Son than of the Father. Is that true? I've heard some say with real gratitude, "I have no fear of the judgment because I know I have a Friend in court."

And I ask, "Who is that Friend?"

Then comes the warm response, "Why, Jesus, of course."

"You mean the Father is no Friend of yours?"

"Oh, I didn't mean that."

"Then what did you mean when you said that you were happy to have a Friend in court and Jesus is your Friend? Is the Father no Friend? What of the Holy Spirit?"

You remember Jesus' words to Philip in John 14:7, 9: "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. . . . He who has seen me has seen the Father." (RSV) If you knew this to be true, you would never say, "I am grateful that I have a Friend in court and I mean Jesus and not the Father." You couldn't say that, could you?

Some derive comfort from the thought, as they face the final judgment at the hands of One who knows us in such detail, that when their cases come up for consideration, Jesus will be there interceding with the Father in our behalf. Does that mean that because gentle Jesus is pleading with the Father, we are more likely to receive merciful treatment? Think what that implies about the Father! Is the Father less loving and less forgiving than the Son? Who says that He is exacting, unforgiving, and severe? Are we even going to, in expressing our doctrines, seem to support Satan's charges against our God?

Remember Jesus' words in John 16:26, next on the list: "I need make no promise to plead to the Father for you [or, as we had in an earlier Bible Reference Sheet, Goodspeed's translation: there is no need for me to intercede with the Father for you. Why not?]. For the Father himself loves you." (*Phillips*) The Son does not love us more than the Father, or understand us better than the Father, or is more sympathetic than the Father. ***If we have seen the Son, we have seen the Father.*** {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>

The Bible makes it plain that there is nothing arbitrary about the judgment. There is no arbitrary standard by which we are measured. There are no arbitrary decisions made. Look at John 3:19: "And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." (RSV) You see, if we have turned down the truth, we have not been won to trust and a willingness to listen. Therefore, God has not been able to help us and to heal us. There are no new hearts and right spirits. We are not the kind of people who would be safe to admit to the hereafter. There is nothing arbitrary about that. Look also at John 12:47, 48:

If any one hears my sayings [this truth and light that I brought] and does not keep them, I do not judge him [I thought all judgment had been given to Him? Well, He says, “actually I don’t judge him.” It works this way.]. . . . He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. (RSV)

You see, we are judged by the truth. It is a matter of simply diagnosing our condition. It is a consequence. It is a result. There is nothing arbitrary about it all. And then what God does to those who have turned down the truth (and so He has not been able to heal them) is not arbitrary. For what does God do to those who reject the priceless truth? What else can He do in a free universe but sadly give them up? As we read last week, and look again at Romans 1:25, 28: “Because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie. . . . God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct.” (RSV) He sadly gave them up to what they chose to do anyway. In the end even, God simply recognizes, and diagnoses and announces the results.

In those awesome words of Revelation 22:11, as He looks at his people in the end, some who have rejoiced in the truth and some who have turned it down, He says, “Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy.” (NIV) Just go on doing what you are doing. Go on being what you are. You see, there is nothing arbitrary. There is no need to fear God in this. We have made our choice and we are reaping the results, both good and bad. {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>*

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

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}

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}

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}

He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. {ML 289.5}

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

Many are the ways in which God is seeking to make Himself known to us and bring us into communion with Him. Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of His hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature. The green fields, the lofty trees, the buds and flowers, the passing cloud, the falling rain, the babbling brook, the glories of the heavens, speak to our hearts, and invite us to become acquainted with Him who made them all. {SC 85.1}

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, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” the character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. Through Christ our heavenly Father is made known as the God of love. {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 5}

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}

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}

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. {TMK 366.5}

We can understand as much of His purposes as we are capable of comprehending; beyond this we may still trust the hand that is omnipotent, the heart that is full of love. {Ed 169.1}

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship him in spirit and in truth. Christ revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature. Christ came to the world to sow it with truth. He held the keys to all the treasures of wisdom, and was able to open doors to science, and to reveal undiscovered stores of knowledge, were it essential to salvation. He presented to men that which was exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the paternal love of the Father, who “so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” {RH, November 17, 1891 par. 7}

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}

Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best. {MH 417.3}

Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father’s notice. Satan’s hatred against God leads him to delight in destroying even the dumb creatures. It is only through God’s protecting care that the birds are preserved to gladden us with their songs of joy. But He does not forget even the sparrows. “Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” Matthew 10:31. {8T 273.1}

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

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}

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, 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'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. {PP 373.2}

The rainbow spanning the heavens with its arch of light is a token of "the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature." Genesis 9:16. And the rainbow encircling the throne on high is also a token to God's children of His covenant of peace. {Ed 115.1}

The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. {FLB 77.5}

The blessings of salvation are for every soul. Nothing but his own choice can prevent any man from becoming a partaker of the promise in Christ by the gospel. {DA 403.2}

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}

Our Lord adapts Himself to our special needs. He is a shade on our right hand. He walks close by our side, ready to supply all our necessities. He comes very near to those who are engaged in willing service for Him. He knows every one by name. O what assurances we have of the tender love of Christ (MS 51, 1903). {3BC 1153.8}

His law is to extend the shield of divine protection over every soul who puts his trust in Him. {TDG 109.2}

What a God is our God! He rules over His kingdom with diligence and care, and He has built a hedge—the Ten Commandments—about His subjects to preserve them from the results of transgression. In requiring obedience to the laws of His kingdom, God gives His people health and happiness, peace and joy. {CT 454.1}

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}

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}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*

Lesson 4 “The Lord Hears *and* Delivers”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 139:1–18; Psalm 121; Psalm 17:8; Matthew 23:37; 1 Corinthians 10:1–4; Hebrews 4:15, 16.

Memory Text

“The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles” (Psalm 34:17, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. My Frame Was Not Hidden From You
- III. Assurance of God’s Care
- IV. The Lord Is a Refuge in Adversity
- V. Defender and Deliverer
- VI. Help From the Sanctuary
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. One could call the theme for this week the Psalms of Rescue or Deliverance. Praying for deliverance operates on the assumption that prayer makes a difference in one’s life and the lives of others (the opposite of Deism). What is the role of prayer in the balance between God’s sovereignty and human freedom? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Psalm 139:1-18. In poetic language, what does this Psalm tell us about God? What difference can that understanding make in our everyday lives? Is God’s complete and intimate knowledge of us a source of encouragement or fear? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Psalm 121. How is God involved in our daily affairs? (Monday’s Lesson)

4. Read Psalm 91:2-7. What does the Psalmist do in times of trouble? How do you integrate the message of this passage with life's greatest tragedies? Read Matthew 23:37. What does this text reveal about God? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-4. How does Paul describe the Exodus story? What does he do to make that story come alive for those in Corinth who would read his letter? Read Psalm 114. How is this Exodus story similar or different from the core story in the book of Exodus? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Psalm 20:1-3, 6. Where does help come from in this text? Read Hebrews 4:15-16. What special twist does Hebrews add to the Old Testament concept of the Sanctuary? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. Read Matthew 4:5-7. How can the Psalms be misused in very practical situations? What do we do when what the Psalms promise doesn't match with the reality you are experiencing? What are some other ways that the Psalms can be misused? (Friday's Lesson)
8. Read Psalm 145:18-20. How can we develop trust in God in all circumstances? How does learning to trust God in the good times help us learn how to trust him in the difficult times? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

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, NSRV) 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 whatever you are able to read into the details, the picture remains the same. Jesus did not expose them before the crowd. That’s clear. He didn’t expose them, until they were all gone. And He could have readily done so. Now, why didn’t He? Well, why didn’t He expose Simon in that other story? Why didn’t He expose Judas? Well, if we’re His children, what father enjoys humiliating his children? You see, unfortunately, we so often make just the good people His children. The others are not, you see. So He could expose them; they’re not His children. Is not God the father of bad children as well as good children? And I think it’s so crucial to realize that.

When Jesus watches the wicked die, He is watching members of His family die. When we say, “Have you joined the family of God?” we mean, “Have you joined the saints?” Well, that’s not really true. We are all members of the family. He’s going to lose part of His family. When you count your own children, from day to day, say you have six, how many do you have tonight? Three perhaps? The good ones. You don’t have the others. Hopefully tomorrow you’ll have four, maybe five. Have you ever had a day when you’d own up to all six of your children? I’m glad my folks didn’t do this. And some day my father might say, “I don’t have any children tonight. They all were bad.” That would make no sense. You know Lucifer is a child of God? The worst one He’s got. And some day He’ll watch him die. And isn’t it safe to say that that brilliant child of His will leave an eternal void in the infinite memory of God. He’ll always remember His most brilliant son, and He lost him. And He’ll miss us if we’re lost. That pain will last forever. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – John*, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/57MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/58MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

“When you get back to the disciples, tell the disciples and especially tell Peter, that the Lord has arisen and will be back tonight.” Now this is the way the Lord treats people who’ve done terrible things. That was a terrible thing Peter did. And what a sin Mary committed over and over again. But they’re the ones who needed the most encouragement. They were sensitive people, people of strong feeling but doing wrong, and terribly depressed over what they had

done. They needed encouragement. The one who is our heavenly Father and doesn't want to lose one of us, instead of condemning them, He sought to revive their self-respect. He treated them with dignity. Now if we imitate Christ as Paul did that's the way we'll treat other people. It seems to suggest that the worse a person's predicament, the more we'll go out of our way to help him recover his dignity and self-respect. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 14, 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/27MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/28MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

The controversy is about God. Likewise, the good news is not about us. The good news is about God; that He has won His case. And the universe has conceded that He has won His case. And only here on this little planet way out in space are there any people foolish enough, and ungrateful enough, or blind enough, Paul would even say stupid enough, to turn from this good news and believe Satan's lies about God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 3, 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/5MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/6MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

Years ago, we had a fire that came right up to a house we lived in formerly. And it was so hot as it swept up the bank, it burned the leaves on trees the other side of our house. But there were six houses in a row on a ridge, none of them damaged, although we were bombed with borate. I spent twenty-four hours hosing down that red gummy fluid. But it was a pleasure to hose all night long and all the next day, since no real damage had been done. But all of the homeowners in those six homes met for a while to think how grateful we were that the fire had not reached us. But I couldn't help raising the question: Supposing the fire had reached one of the six homes. What would we be saying? Would five of us be thanking the Lord for His protection, and we don't know about this other person? Perhaps he had not been faithful with his tithes. And we're right into the book of Job. That explanation doesn't work all the time. Job was a perfect and an upright man, and the fire came right through his premises, didn't it? So, the book of Job helps at such times. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Numbers, 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/7MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/8MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Well, why wouldn't God just leave them? I mean, isn't that the message we have: If you don't behave, God won't look after you? We tell about the little boy who goes where he shouldn't and we have sometimes suggested that the angels stay on the sidewalk outside the building until the little boy comes out. In other words, you're only protected when you're good. Well, like as not that isn't when we need it. How about the lost sheep? Did the shepherd look after the ninety and nine and wait for the lost one to come home? No, he left the ninety and nine, and he went after the lost sheep. That's a consistent picture in scripture, not to encourage us in sinning, but it surely says something about God. He went after the wandering, lost sheep. I think that's a very cruel thing we sometimes tell our children. Now, Ellen White does say that if they persist and persist in rejecting God's protection, He will not force it upon them. But don't you like the thought when you let your children go in the morning, that should they misbehave during the day, God will not abandon them? Or are we only protected when we are good? Are we only under grace when we are good? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Esther & Job, recorded January 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/25MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/26MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. {FLB 62.8}

The mechanism of the human body cannot be fully understood; it presents mysteries that baffle the most intelligent. It is not as the result of a mechanism, which, 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 a continual evidence of the power of an ever-present God. {8T 260.2}

Do not be troubled. Jesus loves you, and will care for you and bless you. The active, aggressive battle you can no more fight, but you can let Jesus fight it for you. He says to you, "Give your case entirely into My hands. Be still, and know that I am God." {UL 335.6}

Our God has heaven and earth at His command, and He knows just what we need. We can see only a little way before us; "but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4:13. Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best. {8T 272.1}

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

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. {SC 100.1}

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

We can see only a little way before us; "but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." He never becomes confused. He sits above the confusion and distractions of the earth, and all things are opened to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He can order that which His providence sees is best. {ML 10.4}

The Holy Spirit is His representative in our world, to execute the divine purpose of bringing to fallen man power from above, that he may be an overcomer. All who enter into a covenant with Jesus Christ become by adoption the children of God. They are cleansed by the regenerating power of the Word, and angels are commissioned to minister unto them (MS 57, 1907). {7BC 922.1}

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}

Holy, ministering agencies of heaven are cooperating with human agencies to lead into safe paths all who love truth and righteousness. It is the greatest joy of the angels of heaven to spread the shield of their tender love over souls who turn to God; . . . {7BC 922.9}

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}

Look constantly to Jesus. Take all your troubles to Him. He will never misunderstand you. He is the refuge of His people. Under the shadow of His protection they can pass unharmed. Believe in Him and trust in Him. He will not give you up to the spoiler. {HP 176.3}

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}

The path where God leads the way may lie through the desert or the sea, but it is a safe path. {PP 290.3}

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}

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}

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}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy

Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. {8T 19.1}

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

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}

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. {PP 33.2}

These things were not written merely that we might read and wonder, but that the same faith which wrought in God's servants of old might work in us. In no less marked a manner than He wrought then will He work now wherever there are hearts of faith to be channels of His power. {CG 43.1}

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness. {COL 386.1}

Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God's purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself. The soul, corrupted and deformed, is to be purified, transformed, that it may be clothed in "the beauty of the Lord our God," "conformed to the image of His Son." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Psalm 90:17; Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 2:9. Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain. {MB 60.3}

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 results of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. Satan had declared that the law of God was faulty, and that the good of the universe demanded a change in its requirement. In attacking the law, he thought to overthrow the authority of its Author, and gain for himself the supreme allegiance. But through the plan of salvation the precepts of the law were to be proved perfect and immutable, that at last one glory and love might rise to God throughout the universe, ascribing glory and honor and praise to him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 12}

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 and endowed with power to do the divine will. The fall of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent. Redemption was not an after thought, 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. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 3}

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}

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}

In Christ is gathered all the glory of the Father. In Him is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. The glory of the attributes of God are expressed in His character. {7BC 907.3}

If in our ignorance we make missteps, the Saviour does not forsake us. We need never feel that we are alone. Angels are our companions. The Comforter that Christ promised to send in His name abides with us. In the way that leads to the City of God there are no difficulties which those who trust in Him may not overcome. There are no dangers which they may not escape. There is not a sorrow, not a grievance, not a human weakness, for which He has not provided a remedy. {MH 249.1}

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. {SD 121.3}

We may have the same help that Christ had, we may have strength for every emergency; for God will be our front guard and our rearward. He will shut us in on every side. {AG 259.5}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*
Lesson 5 “Singing *the Lord’s Song in a Strange Land*”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 79:5–13; Psalm 88:3–12; Psalm 69:1–3; Psalm 22:1; Psalm 77; Psalm 73:1–20; 1 Peter 1:17.

Memory Text

“How shall we sing the LORD’S song in a strange land?” (Psalm 137:4).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Days of Evil
- III. At Death’s Door
- IV. Where Is God?
- V. Has His Promise Failed Forevermore?
- VI. Lest the Righteous Be Tempted
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The Psalms were expressed in an imperfect world, one of sin, evil, suffering, and death. There are many statements of perplexity at the apparent absence of God in the face of the great flourishing of evil. One of the most jarring parts of this poetic book is Psalm 137. Read Psalm 137:1-4. The world as we know it today has increasingly become a “strange land” for those who seek to know God. What is your answer to the Psalmists’ question: How do I live a life of faith in a strange land? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Psalms 74:18-22 and 79:5-13. What is at stake in these passages? At what point in Israel’s history would the language of these psalms best fit? To what degree does the behavior of Christians today bring disrepute on God’s reputation? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Read Psalm 88:3-12. What stage of life is this psalm describing? What difference does it make to read Psalm 88 after the cross and the resurrection of Jesus? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Psalm 102:1-7. What type of suffering is exhibited here and how does the Psalmist deal with it? What can we learn from the psalmist's response to God's apparent absence? How do you respond at times when God appears to be silent? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Psalm 77. What experience is the author going through and what resolution happens by the end of the psalm? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. A major theme in the Psalms is the prosperity of the wicked and the challenge that generates for the righteous. The most famous of these Psalms is Psalm 73. After reading it, determine what it is that brings the psalmist through the crisis of faith?
7. It seems clear at this point that biblical faith is not simply about confidence and assertions, it also involves a considerable amount of uncertainty and suspense. What challenging uncertainties have you faced and how did you deal with them? (Friday's Lesson)
8. Ellen White offers the following advice for facing uncertainties: "Summon all your powers to look up, not down at your difficulties; then you will never faint by the way. You will soon see Jesus behind the cloud, reaching out His hand to help you; and all you have to do is to give Him your hand in simple faith and let Him lead you. As you become trustful you will, through faith in Jesus, become hopeful." 5T 578-579. How helpful have tactics like this been in your life? (Friday's Lesson)
9. Another statement of advice about life's challenges: "Faith grows strong by coming in conflict with doubts and opposing influences. The experience gained in these trials is of more value than the most-costly jewels." 3T 555. Share a story of your own experience with doubts and "opposing influences". (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Faith is our conviction. It's being certain about things that at the moment we cannot see. And if you know the background of that verse in Hebrews, you know that this goes back to Habakkuk; chapters one and two where Habakkuk says to God: "Why aren't you going to do something?" And God says: "I am. But you wouldn't believe it if I told you." And Habakkuk says: "I do. And I'm going to wait and see." And God says: "If what I have predicted seems slow, wait for it; it will come. My righteous one will live in trust." That famous verse, "The just shall live by faith," is not discussing forgiveness or justification. The background for that verse is the one who is right with me—and my friend, will trust me and be willing to wait. And that's the kind of trust, and right relationship with God, that really counts. And when we come to Romans, (to look at that verse a little later) that's the background for it.

The angels had such trust, the loyal ones. They had questions! But they said to God, “We trust You enough that we’re willing to wait,” and they waited all the way to Calvary for some of their answers. They even heard the promise to Adam and Eve that God was going to do something, and they were willing to wait because they trusted God. It certainly helps to understand “salvation by faith” and “righteousness by faith,” to understand faith as trust in this way. We’re not saved by faith. That is, faith does not save us. God saves us. But God can only save those who trust Him.

Like a physician, God stands ready to heal all the damage done. But He cannot force us to be well. If we don’t trust Him enough to listen, and to cooperate, and let Him heal the damage done, there’s no way He can heal us. Physicians cannot heal rebellious patients who stay away because they think the doctor is a quack. Only if there is trust there—there needs to be mutual trust—can healing really take place. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3, “All God Asks Is Trust” 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/3MMCAG>

You remember in John 3 and John 12 Jesus says, “I don’t condemn anybody. I didn’t come to judge you. Oh, there is something that will judge you in the last day. I won’t be the one. The truth that I brought to you; it will judge you. If you like the truth, if you like the message about healing and salvation, and you trust Me enough to accept it and follow it, all will be well. If you reject the light, you reject the truth and the plan of healing. I won’t condemn you then, but you will die, and I’ll grieve as I give you up for the last time.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 14, 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/27MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/28MMROMANS66> Part 2)

But “under the demands of law” 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>*

But the fact that Jesus washed Judas' feet just before he went out to betray Him tells me how God will treat me every day of my life, even if He foreknows that I am going to be lost and betray Him in the end. Look how Jesus treated Judas! I don't think we can tell from God's blessings whether or not we are going to be saved or lost. He blesses everybody! Isn't that what Matthew 5 says? "God causes the sun to shine on the good and the evil, His rain to fall on the just and on the unjust."

That's the way God is. We're all His children, and if He knows some of us are going to be lost, do you think He would start mistreating us? That isn't the way God is. If anything, if this is the only life we're going to live, He would treat us graciously. He would get down and wash our feet! Even if He knows we are going to be lost. And Jesus showed that, I think, very clearly, in the upper room. {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 1983:

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

Lou: One of our congregation went out of her way to type up the question that she has had for a number of years. She says this, "Can you give a reason why a loving God would allow a good Christian woman to be murdered? She was a good help in her small church. She was the treasurer of her church. The last Sabbath of her life they had a consecration service at the church. She dedicated herself anew to God, and she was murdered that afternoon at her house. She was the treasurer, and she had money at her house, and apparently that was the reason that someone broke in and she was killed." And this individual says, "The reason I know about this is that she was my sister."

Graham: Again, happy the person who knows God very well at a time like this. It doesn't mean that we would know the answer. I don't think Job ever found out why those things happened to him that did. But all he knew was that those theologians were wrong. And those theologians came to Job and said, "You cannot be asking God about this." I mean, Job was crying to God with intense feeling and saying, "God, how can You do this to me? I've been Your good friend all this time, and now You won't even speak to me. You won't explain this." And the theologians

were going on with their very legalistic explanation. Finally he said, “I wish you brethren would be quiet. I appreciate your coming, but you’re not helping me at all.” None of their explanations were good. He said, “If only I could talk to God, I’m sure I could clear this up.” And eventually the boldness of his inquires of God reached such a level that those three men were worried for their friend that God would surely zap him on the spot for daring to inquire. And God broke in and said, “Job, you have said of Me what is right.”

So if a person is wrestling with this, we may not find out. I’m sure we won’t find out the answer to every such absolutely unfair thing that happens on this planet during this emergency. But some things we know for sure; the kind of person God is, and that He welcomes us to lodge our inquires with feeling, and hopefully we will trust Him enough to wait for the answer.

Lou: Acquainted well enough to trust when we don’t know how to answer all these things.

Graham: That’s the thing. And I’d like to think that that sister was such a saint; don’t worry about her. She will arise in the resurrection and say, “What am I doing here?” She will have no complaints. She’ll be looking for her sister. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #6 with Lou Venden, “Evaluating the Evidence” recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/6MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

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}

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}

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}

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. {PP 68.2}

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. {ST, December 22, 1914 par. 4}

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. {COL 173.1}

Not without a purpose does God send trial to His children. He never leads them otherwise than they would choose to be led if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as workers together with Him. He subjects them to discipline to humble them, to lead them, through trial and affliction, to see their weakness and draw near to Him. . . . {HP 267.2}

The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. {GC 629.2}

We all have many difficulties to meet, many perplexing problems to solve. But we have an all-powerful Helper, who will listen to our requests as willingly and gladly as He listened to the requests of those who, when He was on this earth in person, came to Him for help. . . . {HP 124.2}

In Christ the character of the Father was revealed. As children looked upon His countenance, they saw purity and goodness shining forth from His eyes. In His countenance gentleness, meekness, love, and conscious power were combined. But though every word, every gesture, every expression of His face, betokened His divine supremacy, humility marked His deportment and bearing. He came but for one purpose, and that was the salvation of the lost. {ML 300.4}

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}

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}

To look to God for help at all times, this is our safety. {TDG 199.2}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

None need abandon themselves to discouragement and despair. Satan may come to you with the cruel suggestion, “Yours is a hopeless case. You are irredeemable.” But there is hope for you in Christ. God does not bid us overcome in our own strength. He asks us to come close to His side. Whatever difficulties we labor under, which weigh down soul and body, He waits to make us free. {MH 249.2}

Every soul is as fully known to Jesus as if he were the only one for whom the Saviour died. The distress of every one touches His heart. The cry for aid reaches His ear. He came to draw all men unto Himself. He bids them, “Follow Me,” and His Spirit moves upon their hearts to draw them to come to Him. Many refuse to be drawn. Jesus knows who they are. He also knows who gladly hear His call, and are ready to come under His pastoral care. He says, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” He cares for each one as if there were not another on the face of the earth. {DA 480.1}

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. {DA 224.5}

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}

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}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*

Lesson 6 “I Will Arise”

Read for this week’s study

Psalms 18:3–18; Psalm 41:1–3; Deuteronomy 15:7–1; Psalm 82; Psalm 96:6–10; Psalm 99:1–4; Romans 8:34.

Memory Text

“ ‘For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now I will arise,’ says the LORD; ‘I will set him in the safety for which he yearns’ ” (Psalm 12:5, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Majestic Warrior
- III. Justice for the Oppressed
- IV. How Long Will You Judge Unjustly?
- V. Pour Out Your Indignation
- VI. The Lord’s Judgment and the Sanctuary
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The Psalms are filled with protests against the violence and oppression in the world. Many of these protests arise from the psalmists themselves and some are the psalmists speaking in behalf of God. God is as distressed about injustice as the psalmists are. But His proper time for intervention does not always coincide with human expectations. There is sometimes, therefore, a disjunct between the expectations of the psalmists and the actions, or lack of action, on the part of God. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Psalm 18:3-18. What relevance does this passage have for those who are experiencing oppression or unjust suffering? Read Psalms 18:34, 47-48. What is the relationship between David’s military skills and God’s interventions in Israel’s battles? Whatever your gifts, your skills, or your success in life, why is it important to

remember that God is the source of it all? What happens to those who forget?
(Sunday's Lesson)

3. Read Psalm 146:6-10. Who are the objects of God's passion for justice in this passage? Read 2 Corinthians 8:9. In what unique way did God identify with the "poor and needy"? Can you think of different types of poverty? What are the causes of these different types of poverty and how should each be addressed? (Monday's Lesson)
4. According to Psalm 72, Israel's kings were to rule in harmony with God's character. The mission was to ensure peace and justice in the land and care for the vulnerable. Read Psalm 82. What are the implications of God's character for human leaders? Think of a time when you were in authority over others. How do these principles apply in real-life situations? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. There are psalms that ask God to take vengeance on other nations or individuals. These psalms can be perplexing because they seem to contradict Jesus' injunction to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44). Read Psalm 137:7-9. Many find this passage deeply offensive. Why is such a passage in the Bible at all? How do we integrate it with Matthew 5:44? Who hasn't at times had thoughts or fantasies about vengeance on those who have wronged them? What do you do with such thoughts and feelings? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Psalm 96:6-10 and Romans 8:33-34. Where does God's judgment take place and what are the implications for us today? Read Psalm 132:7-9, 13-14. How do you process God's determination to dwell in Zion forever? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. In Friday's lesson, the study guide asked the following question: "What must we focus on in order to maintain our faith in God's love and goodness and power?" It seems that the answer to that question is embedded in the question itself? Would you agree? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: The Bible does speak about references like, "Vengeance is Mine," Words about the wrath of God, typical references to the destruction of the wicked. What about those kinds of ways of speaking of our Lord?

Graham: Those will fit very well into next week, "There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God," but let's take "vengeance." "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay." Before that, Paul says, "Leave room for the wrath of God. Don't avenge yourself. Let Him do it." And God says, "Look, let Me take vengeance on My children because I love them all. Now, if I take vengeance on this enemy of yours, it might win him. Would you mind?" And you say, "Wait a minute. I'm not going to let You take vengeance, if vengeance means You are going to win my enemy." You see, the beauty of that is God says, "Let Me discipline My own children. I might win some of them." Well, I

wonder how many of us really want God to do the avenging? Because there's the hazard that I might turn up in the Kingdom and meet my worst enemy because God has won him through the discipline.

Lou: That means that the word "vengeance" here, is God using it in a quite different way than we might be capable of doing on our own.

Graham: "Let Me give your enemy what I think he needs."

Lou: And that wins them.

Graham: That's the hazard . . .

Lou: And you might be neighbors.

Graham: Letting God take vengeance is very hazardous. He might win your enemy. {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>

Further Study with Ellen White

God has made ample provision for His people; and if they rely upon His strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. . . . It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer. {PP 421.2}

It is a wonderful thought that human beings can speak the Word of God, in simple words of comfort and encouragement. The humblest instruments will be used of God to sow the seeds of truth, which may spring up and bear fruit, because the one in whose heart they were sown needed help—a kind thought, a kind word, made effective by the One who has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—Letter 329a, Nov. 16, 1905, to her 19-year-old granddaughter Mabel. {TDG 329.6}

Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet. {MH 481.2}

It is not the will of God that His people should be weighed down with care. But our Lord does not deceive us. He does not say to us, "Do not fear; there are no dangers in your path." He

knows there are trials and dangers, and He deals with us plainly. He does not propose to take His people out of a world of sin and evil, but He points them to a never-failing refuge. . . . {TMK 225.2}

God takes care of you in the place where it is your duty to be. {CH 424.1}

The world's Redeemer would not have man in ignorance of Satan's devices. The vast confederacy of evil is arrayed against those who would overcome; but Christ would have us look to the things that are not seen, to the armies of heaven that encamp round about those who love God, to deliver them. The angels of heaven are interested in behalf of man. The power of Omnipotence is at the service of those who trust in God. The Father accepts the righteousness of Christ in behalf of His followers, and they are surrounded with light and holiness which Satan cannot penetrate. The voice of the Captain of our salvation speaks to His followers, saying, "'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' I am your defense; advance to victory." {FW 93.1}

We are not inclined to associate kingly glory and judicial authority with the self-denial, patience, love, and forgiveness shown in the life of Christ; yet these attributes qualified the Saviour for his exalted position. The qualities of character which he developed on earth constitute his exaltation in glory. His triumphs were gained by love, not by force. In coming to Christ the sinner consents to be elevated to the noblest ideal of man. {6Red 74.1}

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

In the annals of human history the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as 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, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. . . . {AG 50.2}

Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,—to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, "I have manifested thy name." "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 9}

The work of Christ is to redeem, to restore, to seek and to save that which was lost. If we are connected with Christ, we also are partakers of the divine nature {HP 291.2}

We are not to think of God only as a judge, and to forget him as our loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this; for our whole spiritual life will be molded by our conceptions of God's character. {RH, April 5, 1887 par. 10}

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'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}

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}

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity, and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, He who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone able to reveal the character of the Deity to mankind. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {MH 422.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*
Lesson 7 “Your Mercy Reaches Unto *the* Heavens”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 136; Psalm 51; Psalm 130; Psalm 113; Psalm 123.

Memory Text

“I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations. For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, And Your truth unto the clouds” (Psalms 57:9, 10, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. His Mercy Endures Forever
- III. Create in Me a Clean Heart
- IV. If You, Lord, Should Mark Iniquities
- V. Praise to the Majestic and Merciful God
- VI. Forget Not All His Benefits
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The lesson for this week coins a new genre of psalms, “mercy psalms”. The lesson collects some “psalms of confession” and combines them with some “psalms of praise” to create a fresh approach. The over-riding theme is the contrast between the greatness of God and the frailty of humanity. Human beings have nothing in themselves that would recommend them before God, they are fully dependent on God’s mercy. So, these psalms celebrate the fact that God’s mercy is everlasting. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Psalm 136. This psalm invites God’s people to praise the Lord for His mercy. On what grounds are they invited to praise God? What does the psalmist mean by calling Yahweh the “God of gods”? How does that picture differ from the New Testament view of God? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Psalm 51:1-5. Why in this passage does the psalmist appeal to God’s mercy? In what sense is it appropriate for him to say that his heinous crimes against Bathsheba

- and her husband were committed against God alone? Read Psalm 51:6-19. How is forgiveness of sin portrayed here? What is the goal of divine forgiveness? If sacrifice isn't the main thing with regard to forgiveness, why did God require it in the first place? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Psalm 130. How is sin described in this passage? What do you make of the concept of "marking iniquities"? What does it mean that God does not do that? What does it mean to you that God does not "mark iniquity"? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 5. Read Psalms 113 and 123. The lesson paired these two together in an interesting fashion. What two different aspects of God's character are depicted in these psalms? When it talks about the "name of Yahweh", what is the significance of a person's name in the Hebrew culture? What does it mean that God "humbles Himself" (Psa 113:6)? What is to be gained by a strong focus on the majesty and power of God that you find in Psalm 113? What is worship? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 6. Read Psalm 103. How is God's mercy portrayed in this psalm? Read Exodus 34:6-7. In what way does verse 8 recall Exodus 34:6-7 and how does that relate to God's actions in behalf of individuals? How would you respond to someone who feels verse 18 undercuts all the talk in these psalms about God's mercy? What does the word "blessing" mean? How is it possible for us to "bless God"? Why does God call us to worship Him? Is it some sort of ego trip? (Thursday's Lesson)
 7. How do the expressions of God's mercy in the New Testament fit with those in the Psalms (Ephesians 2:4-5; 1 Timothy 1:16; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 4:16)? (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>

I think that when he said this, he showed himself way in advance of many modern theologians, who beg for forgiveness, but don't ask for the clean heart and right spirit. Nobody's going to be saved without the clean heart and the right spirit. Forgiveness doesn't get us into heaven. That's legalism. Heaven will not be peopled with pardoned crooks, but with people who have new hearts and right spirits; and we don't have to use just this verse, but how about what Jesus said to Nicodemus? He didn't say, "Nicodemus, unless you be officially pardoned, you'll not get into the Kingdom." He said, "Unless you have a new heart and right spirit, and be reborn, you'll not see the Kingdom." That runs all through the Bible. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – 2 Samuel, recorded November 1983, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

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

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>*

Further Study with Ellen White

Love was the element in which Christ moved and walked and worked. He came to embrace the world in the arms of His love. . . . {SD 147.2}

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}

The heart of Infinite Love yearns after those who feel powerless to free themselves from the snares of Satan; and He graciously offers to strengthen them to live for Him. “Fear thou not,”

He bids them; “for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.” . . . {CC 235.4}

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 does not deal with us as finite men deal with one another. His thoughts are thoughts of mercy, love, and tenderest compassion. {SC 53.1}

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}

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 forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9. 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. And again he says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

The plan of redemption is not merely a way of escape from the penalty of transgression, but through it the sinner is forgiven his sins, and will be finally received into heaven—not as a forgiven culprit pardoned and released from captivity, yet looked upon with suspicion and not admitted to friendship and trust; but welcomed as a child, and taken back into fullest confidence. {7BC 950.6}

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}

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}

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 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}

To be pardoned in the way that Christ pardons, is not only to be forgiven, but to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. The Lord says, "A new heart will I give unto thee." The image of Christ is to be stamped upon the very mind, heart, and soul. The apostle says, "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). {3SM 190.2}

The great plan of redemption results in fully bringing back the world into God's favor. All that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth is redeemed, to be the eternal abode of the obedient. For six thousand years Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God's original purpose in its creation is accomplished. "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." Daniel 7:18. {PP 342.1}

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

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

The Saviour in His miracles revealed the power that is continually at work in man's behalf, to sustain and to heal him. Through the agencies of nature, God is working, day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, to keep us alive, to build up and restore us. When any part of the body sustains injury, a healing process is at once begun; nature's agencies are set at work to restore soundness. But the power working through these agencies is the power of God. All life-giving power is from Him. When one recovers from disease, it is God who restores him. {MH 112.1}

Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer. {MH 113.1}

Satan had clothed the Father in his own attributes, but Christ represented Him in His true character of benevolence and love. In the character in which Christ presented Him to the world it was as if He gave a new gift to man. . . . {LHU 36.4}

Jesus came into the world to illustrate the character of God in His own life, and He swept back the misrepresentations that Satan had originated, and revealed the glory of God. It was only by living among men that He could reveal the mercy, compassion, and love of His heavenly Father; for it was only by actions of benevolence that He could set forth the grace of God. The unbelief of men was deep seated, and yet they could not resist the testimony of His God-like example, and His deeds of love and truth. {SD 139.3}

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 517.2}

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}

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}

The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50. {ChS 251.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*

Lesson 8 “Wisdom for Righteous Living”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 119:1–16; Psalm 90; John 3:16; Psalm 95:7–11; Psalm 141; Psalm 128.

Memory Text

“So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Your Word I Have Hidden in My Heart
- III. Teach Us to Number Our Days
- IV. The Lord’s Test
- V. Deceitfulness of the Wicked Way
- VI. Blessings of Righteous Living
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Keeping God’s law is by no means a legalistic observance of rules but life in an intimate relationship with God, a life full of blessings (Psalm 119:1, 2; Psalm 128). [...] If God’s children heed God’s instruction and admonishment, their faith will be purified and their trust in the Lord strengthened. Wisdom for righteous living is gained through the dynamics of life with God amid temptations and challenges. Thus, the prayer that God would teach us to number our days so that we may gain a heart of wisdom (Psalm 90:12), reflects an ongoing commitment to walk in faithfulness to the Lord.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. One of the fascinating features of Old Testament poetry is acrostics – starting each successive line with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Psalms 25, 34, and 145 are good examples: the first letter of each *verse* starts with the next letter of the [Hebrew] alphabet (thus each psalm has 22 verses). In Psalms 111 & 112, however, the acrostic is in the first letter of each *line*, thus they both have 22 lines (but only 10 verses).

3. In Psalm 119 every first word in each of the *eight verses* starts with the same letter of the alphabet (making it the longest chapter in the Bible [22x8]).
4. Jews cannot pray very long without meditating on the Torah (see Psalms 1; 19; 119). This puts Torah [“law”] at the center of their spirituality. Why is meditation important in today’s fast paced society? How does meditating deliver us from excessive romanticism, subjectivity or mysticism? What does it teach us about accepted norms of our life, ethical contexts of our faith and the public character of true religion? (Sunday’s lesson) Why does meditation have such a bad reputation in some Christian circles?
5. How do we “number our days” (90:12) in light of eternity (vv.1-4) so that we live wisely (v. 12) and joyfully (vv. 14-15)? (Monday’s lesson?) How is that connected with doing God’s will (v. 14), revealing God’s glory (v. 16) and growing in God’s beauty (v. 17)?
6. Tuesday’s lesson deals with divine testing (see Psalm 81:7, 8; Psalm 95:7–11; and Psalm 105:17–22). How do you understand Psalm 81:7 in light of Exodus 17:1-7 (and Genesis 3:1-9)?
7. How is the progressive and cunning character of temptation depicted in Psalm 1:1 and 141:4? What does the psalmist pray for in Psalm 141? (Wednesday’s lesson) How can we deal with the progressive, alluring and cunning character of evil? How does God “deliver us from evil”? What role does an honest dialogue of faith play in this? How is the role of a worshiping and supporting community highlighted here?
8. Thursday’s lesson focuses on blessings of righteous living (Psalm 1:1–3; 112:1–9; Psalm 128). How do the blessings spread from employment (128:2) to the home, to the city and to the nation (vv. 3-6)? How does this protect us from unhealthy escapism?
9. In our contemporary society, people would rather be happy than wise. How can obtaining wisdom be more desirable than achieving happiness? Why is God more concerned with our holiness (character) than with our comfort? The primal mode of knowing God is obedience based on God’s faithfulness. How can we gain wisdom in exhibiting that in a better and more attractive way?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

I mean, you’ve got someone burning at the stake, and say, “Now, I’ll turn the fire out if you’ll tell me you love me.” You may get a testimony “I love you with all my heart.” Wouldn’t you have reason to question the validity of that testimony? Why then the law? Remember Paul’s answer? He says, “It was added because of sin and transgression.” What is sin, Romans 14, but a breach of trust. What is sin? 1 John 3:4: “the transgression of the law”? Literally, “lawlessness.” What would it mean to keep the law? What is the fulfilling of the law? Romans

13:8, 10. What is the fulfilling of the law, but love? You see, sin is a lack of trust and a lack of love. So God comes and gives us the commandments “Thou shalt trust,” and “Thou shalt love,” and “Thou should be trustworthy,” and “Thou shalt be loveable.” Can you command those things? Paul says you can’t. Well, then, why did God give us the commandments? He says, it isn’t that He’s changed what He wants. All He wants is love and trust-but it was given, because of lack of love, and lack of trust, because of transgression.

What would you do in your home, if your children were killing their playmates on the grounds, and when you were in the office your wife was committing adultery with anyone who rang the doorbell, what would you do? Would you give them up right away? I don’t think it’s going too far to imagine what God did. God gathered His children around Him at the foot of Sinai, and said, “Dear children, please. I want all the murdering to stop, and I want all the adultery to stop, and all the stealing to stop, please.” But think what that says about His family! Do any of you have to do this? I mean tomorrow morning before you go to work and the children go to school, are you going to pause at the end of breakfast, and say, “Now children, let’s make this a good day together, shall we? Do you promise that when one of your playmates tries to go first up the steps to the slide, that you won’t kill him?” “Well, Daddy, if you say so.” And then as you leave the door, and kiss your wife good-bye, you say, “Wife, please promise you won’t commit adultery today.” She says, “Well, if you insist. I mean, you’ve been good to me, and I kind of owe it to you; all right, I won’t today.” But would you have to do it to your family every day. You know, like pinning the Ten Commandments to the wall? The Pharisee thought that’s what the Ten Commandments were all about, and that’s why when he read through the ten, and he hadn’t murdered anybody that day, and he hadn’t committed adultery that day, and he hadn’t broken the Sabbath, because it was Monday anyway, he said, “I thank Thee, Lord that I haven’t broken the Ten Commandments,” because he misunderstood.

How embarrassing it was for God, in the hearing of His enemies who mock Him for apparent failure to hold the family together, to have to say to His children, “Please, children, no more murdering; no more stealing; no more immorality! Could you find it in your hearts to love Me?” If you have to do that in your home tomorrow morning, be sure you close the windows, because if the neighbors hear you saying, “Please, children, don’t murder anyone today, and please, wife, don’t commit adultery,” they’re going to think your home is in a mess! And God’s home was in a mess when He had to say this to His children. That’s a marvelous thing God did, though. He has held Himself up to shame at the hands of His adversary when He has gone these lengths to control us.

Now, you can’t command love, and you can’t command trust. But as a stopgap measure, as an emergency measure, you can say with authority, “I want it to stop.” And then while it stops, not for the best reason, maybe you can teach the right reason, like having it written in your heart, so you really want to do it without being told.

Especially the tenth commandment can't be commanded, can it? The tenth commandment says "Thou shalt not only never do anything wrong, but thou shalt not even want to." Isn't that right? For the tenth? That's like saying, "Thou shalt not only keep the Sabbath, but thou shalt even enjoy it." Isn't that right, in Isaiah? That's why you wonder if you've survived without sinning for very long. For you see, you might have been present at Sabbath School, and had everything ready for worship Friday night. You haven't done anything forbidden all Sabbath, but if you haven't enjoyed it, you have sinned. It says, "If you call the Sabbath a delight, all is well" in Isaiah? How can you command these things? When Paul read the ten, he thought he was doing very well until he got down to that last one, and he says, "When I realized I hadn't done any of those bad things, but I might have wanted to once in awhile," he said, "that infuriated me, and for a while I rebelled. God, you've not only said 'Don't do anything bad,' You've even said 'you can't even want to!'" And after a while he said, "God, I love that tenth commandment because as I understand the Decalogue, the Decalogue describes the kind of people who will be admitted to the kingdom of God in the hereafter." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Exodus, 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/3MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Last week, we considered some of the emergency measures God has used to hold the family together while He goes on demonstrating the truth. Most notable of these emergency measures has been His use of law. And most notable among the laws have been the Ten Commandments. But God's extensive use of law surely seems opposed to freedom. It has indeed been seriously misunderstood. Consider, for example, Jesus' words on this subject to His disciples. In John 14:15 and John 15:14 Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." And added, "You are my friends if you do what I command you." (RSV)

What kind of friendship is it that demands obedience? How do you fit "keep My commandments," with "you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free"?

Sometimes this is explained to mean that we are free so long as we do exactly what we are told. Have you parents ever tried that with your children? "Now children, we want freedom in our home. We can have freedom so long as you do exactly what you are told. Do I make myself clear?" If your children are afraid of you enough, they will say, "You have made yourself clear." But inside they may have serious reservations. It seems such a contradiction. Of course, everything depends upon how we understand what it is that God has asked us to do, and how we understand the reason why He even had to ask us in the first place. I believe, as I am sure

many of you do, that all of God's laws, particularly the Ten Commandments, were given for our best good. They were given especially to preserve freedom—not to infringe upon it.

But law, the use of law, has been seriously misunderstood throughout the Great Controversy. The most notable example of misunderstanding occurred about 1500 years after Sinai, when the Son of God came Himself to live among a people who had been especially entrusted with this revelation of God's will formulated in the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments. Of all people, they should have understood it was an emergency measure—with Moses there to explain that there was no need to be afraid. But when Jesus came, He found a group of people who were totally preoccupied with God's laws and with obedience to their every detail.

He never had to tell them not to make a graven image. They had learned their lesson in the discipline of Babylonian captivity, and they never sank into ordinary idolatry again. He never had to tell them which day was the Sabbath. They regarded it as their highest duty to obey all ten of the Ten Commandments. He never had to urge them to pay tithe. Matthew records they used to tithe even the tiniest things; the seeds of the mint, anise, and cumin. Nor did Jesus have to tell them they should obey the laws of hygiene. He commented on the fact that they would even strain gnats out of their goat's milk lest they should eat a forbidden insect. Nor did He ever have to tell them to search the Scriptures. He said they did it all the time—though they did it for the wrong reason (John 5:39). Nor did He ever have to tell them to be careful in their association with unbelievers. In fact, when they came in from the marketplace, they used to wash themselves in certain special, ceremonial ways, lest they be contaminated by association with the Gentiles. You see, they all could say, like the rich young ruler: "All these things we have obeyed from our youth up."

You would think that in the face of such rigorous obedience and willingness to do precisely what they were told—you would think Jesus would be pleased, and they would recognize and welcome Him when He came. But all heaven watched the incredible scene of those who claimed to love God's law, denouncing the Lawgiver as a lawbreaker. It must have puzzled the angels a great deal. So, Jesus ventured to suggest that while they were working so hard to obey, that actually they were obeying for the wrong reason. Because they were obeying for the wrong reason, they really were not obeying at all. You can imagine how offensive this was to them. In fact, He went further and suggested that if only they knew the God who had given the law, they would keep the law for an entirely different reason, a reason that would make it possible for them to be obedient and free at the same time. {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>*

Lou: There's another phrase in here that raises questions many times. I've wondered about this myself. When we pray "lead us not into temptation," what are we really praying? Does that imply, have you ever wondered about this, "God, be careful; please don't get me into temptation"? That God would really want to do that?

Graham: One thing that helps is the word "temptation" means trial or testing. Some versions have, "Lead us not into hard testing." The idea that God would tempt is unthinkable, as our heavenly Father. Remember James deals with this. That when we're tempted, don't even blame the Devil. He says, "You are led away by your own lusts and enticements." Certainly don't blame God. He wouldn't do any such thing. So "lead us not into temptation" cannot mean, "Please, don't You tempt us," but "Lead us not into testing," Jesus prayed that in Gethsemane. He said, "Remove this cup from Me, if possible." I don't think we should pray, "Lord, I'm ready for it. Bring on the trials; I feel very strong today." I believe we should say, "Lord, in all humility, I mean bring me not into trial; nevertheless, Thy will be done."

I think, "Lead us not into testing" must be coupled with, "Nevertheless, Thy will be done." Jesus did it in Gethsemane, and we do it in the Lord's Prayer. You know, the Lord's Prayer and the prayer in Gethsemane are very similar in a number of respects. "Lead us not into testing, Remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, Thy will be done." So I think the prayer in Gethsemane helps us to understand the Lord's Prayer. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15 with Lou Venden, "Talking to God as a Friend" 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/15MMCAG>*

Does God want us to avoid Him in the hereafter because He has been so forgiving? Because we would be uncomfortable in His presence, in fear that perhaps He might bring up the subject of our sinful past? Mere pardon is no guarantee that He won't do that. So God not only forgives, He also treats us as if we had never sinned. More than that, He even treats us as if we had always been His loyal children.

How do we know that to be true? Is that based on a promise? Now, a promise is only a claim. Is there evidence and demonstration in Scripture that God not only forgives us, but He will treat us as if we have always been His loyal children? Look how God spoke to Solomon about his father, David in 1 Kings 9:3, 4: "The Lord said to him [Solomon] . . . 'If you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did.'" (NIV) Integrity of heart? Uprightness? Think of all the things that David did! And yet, because David had been set right with God and had been won back to trust and had received a new heart and a right spirit, God

describes sinful David as if he had always been His loyal son! He did it to David. He is willing to do it to every one of us. Now, **that** is the meaning of the experience of justification.

And since that Latin term, justification, has come to have such a narrow, legal connotation in theological circles, I suggest we offer a substitution, another term such as, “set right,” or “put right” with our God. Jesus came to bring peace with our God. Not by paying some legal penalty so God would not have to kill us after all. Jesus brought peace with God by showing the truth about our God; that there is no need to be afraid. God will indeed give up those who refuse to trust Him, who turn down the truth, who are unwilling to listen and let Him save and heal them. And they will die, not as penalty, but as consequence. God absolutely will not torture to death His dying children. Guess where that idea came from. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #20, “At Peace with our Heavenly Father” 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/20MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

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. {OHC 137.6}

The Lord did not lock the reservoir of heaven after pouring His Spirit upon the early disciples. We, also, may receive of the fullness of His blessing. Heaven is full of the treasures of His grace, and those who come to God in faith may claim all that He has promised. {3BC 1152.4}

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}

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}

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}

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}

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}

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. {DA 668.3}

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. Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man's true ideal, He awakened, for its attainment, both desire and faith. In His presence souls despised and fallen realized that they still were men, and they longed to prove themselves worthy of His regard. In many a heart that seemed dead to all things holy, were awakened new impulses. To many a despairing one there opened the possibility of a new life. {Ed 80.1}

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 decided to give human beings 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. {CH 222.1}

Christ presented to men that which was entirely contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the love of the Father, who “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. He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them and treated them spitefully. In all this He was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. {CT 29.3}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan’s deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God’s government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world’s dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, “with healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of “the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.” Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. {DA 22.2}

We shall receive help if we ask Him in faith. We are His by creation, we are His by redemption. By the cords of divine love we are bound to the Source of all power and strength. If we will only make God our dependence, asking Him for what we want as a little child asks His father for what he wants, we shall obtain a rich experience. We shall learn that God is the source of all strength and power. {LHU 55.2}

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}

It is for our present happiness and our future good that God subjects us to discipline. The greatest blessing that His children have is the discipline that He sends them. He never leads them otherwise than they would choose to be led if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose that they are fulfilling, as workers together with Him. {TDG 122.3}

God in His great love is seeking to develop in us the precious graces of His Spirit. He permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives. Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience and advances us in the work of character building. The soul that through divine power resists temptation reveals to the world and to the heavenly universe the efficiency of the grace of Christ. {MB 117.1}

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. {FLB 327.6}

The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. {DA 125.2}

The education begun here will not be completed in this life; it will be going forward throughout eternity, ever progressing, never completed. Day by day the wonderful works of God, the evidences of His miraculous power in creating and sustaining the universe, will open before the mind in new beauty. In the light that shines from the throne, mysteries will disappear, and the soul will be filled with astonishment at the simplicity of the things that were never before comprehended. {8T 328.2}

Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now we know in part; but then shall we know even as also we are known. {8T 328.3}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*
Lesson 9 “Blessed Is He Who Comes *in the Name of the Lord*”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 23; John 10:11–15; Psalm 22; Psalm 89:27–32; Colossians 1:16; Psalm 2; Hebrews 7:20–28.

Memory Text

“The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes” (Psalm 118:22, 23, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Divine Self-Sacrificing Shepherd
- III. The Suffering Messiah
- IV. Forever Faithful to His Covenant
- V. Eternal King of Unrivaled Power
- VI. Eternal Priest in the Order of Melchizedek
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Almost all aspects of Christ work in the plan of salvation are seen in the Psalms. [...] No wonder, for example, when talking about His ministry, Jesus had pointed back to the Psalms when speaking to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:44). He wanted them to find in the Psalms evidence for who He was. [...] In the Psalms, through the psalmists’ laments, thanksgivings, praises, and cries for justice and deliverance, we can hear the echoes of Christ’s prayer for the salvation of the world.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What major images representing God do we find in the Psalms? The list can be compiled easily and quickly: shield; high tower; fortress; high place; refuge; rock; stronghold; Horn of salvation, etc. However, when the New Testament writers reflect on the person and the work of Christ, they use different images; a minority voice. How did Jesus refer to his ministry and to God whom he came to represent

- (Luke 15)? Why is it significant that Jesus supports the minority point of view, rather than the majority view?
3. In light of this, why is the image of the good shepherd so critical to our understanding of who God is and how he accomplishes his purposes? How is the relationship between the Lord and his people portrayed in the texts of Psalm 23; Psalm 28:9; Psalm 80:1; Psalm 78:52, 53; Psalm 79:13; and Psalm 100:3? (Sunday's lesson)
 4. How do the "suffering" and "royal" psalms go together (Psalm 22 & 118)? (Monday's lesson) How do they protect us from reading Psalms 2 & 110 as over-triumphalist and help us see them as the reaffirmation of God's kingdom opening into the new day in which God will be enthroned over all the nations?
 5. What is the value of Psalm 89 for our understanding of the story of salvation? (Tuesday's lesson) The only way the writer dares to approach the terror of the present is through the trustworthy promises of the past. How does this remind us that the key word in Old Testament worship is "remember"?
 6. What do these texts teach us about Christ as King (Psalm 2; 110:1–3; 89:4, 13–17; and Psalm 110)? (Wednesday's lesson) What kind of King is he now, and what kind of king will he be in the future? How does a Christian who values Western democracy pray these psalms? These psalms, written with the language and idiom of that time, express the conviction that God will establish his rule on earth as it is in heaven through a coming King.
 7. How does the divine oath introduce a novel element to the Davidic covenant by declaring that the Messiah King is also a Priest (Psalm 110:4-7)? (Thursday's lesson) Why is this important to complement the image of the King (Hebrews 7:20-28)?
 8. These Psalms help us to look back to the great moments of the *past* and see God's mighty acts. They function as evidence in re-framing the pain and puzzlement of the *present*. Doing this invites us to live within the hope and the assurance that God will one day in the *future* again put the whole world right. The past, present and the future belong to God. We are called to live in the story that is both his and ours. Sometimes only music and poetry can express or embody the intense pain and the intense joy that we experience.

Further Study with Ellen White

Every redeemed one will understand the ministry of angels in his own life. The angel who was his guardian from his earliest moment; the angel who watched his steps, and covered his head in the day of peril; the angel who was with him in the valley of the shadow of death, who marked his resting place, who was the first to greet him in the resurrection morning—what will

it be to hold converse with him, and to learn the history of divine interposition in the individual life, of heavenly co-operation in every work for humanity! {Ed 305.2}

All the perplexities of life's experience will then be made plain. Where to us have appeared only confusion and disappointment, broken purposes and thwarted plans, will be seen a grand, overruling, victorious purpose, a divine harmony. {Ed 305.3}

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 labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. {DA 289.1}

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}

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.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 571. {ChS 166.2}

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}

Not merely in the minds of a few finite creatures in this world, but in the minds of all the inhabitants of the heavenly universe, has the immutability of God's law been established. Satan's course against Christ was heralded to every world. When the issue was finally determined, every unfallen being expressed indignation at the rebellion. With one voice they extolled God as righteous, merciful, self-denying, just. . . . {RC 60.4}

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}

The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. {TA 205.2}

In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God. {COL 38.1}

Those who surrender their lives to His guidance and to His service will never be placed in a position for which He has not made provision. Whatever our situation, if we are doers of His word, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexity, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. {MH 248.2}

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}

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}

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. {FLB 76.4}

And the same compassion that reached out to rescue Peter is extended to every soul who has fallen under temptation. It is Satan's special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon. But why should we fear, when God has said, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me?" Isaiah 27:5. Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ. {COL 156.1}

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

First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*

Lesson 10 “Lessons of the Past”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 78; Psalm 105; Galatians 3:29; Psalm 106; Psalm 80; Numbers 6:22–27; Psalm 135.

Memory Text

“Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (Psalm 78:3, 4, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Lord’s Unstoppable Faithfulness
- III. Remembering History and the Praise of God
- IV. Remembering History and Repentance
- V. The Parable of the Lord’s Vine
- VI. The Lord’s Supremacy in History
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The special appeal of the historical Psalms is that they help us to see our lives as part of the history of God’s people and to claim that past as our own. [...] The final goal is to realize that each generation of God’s people plays a small but significant part in the grand historical unfolding of God’s sovereign purposes in the great controversy.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What three key historical epochs are highlighted in Psalm 78? (Sunday’s lesson) Just as the human rebellion did not cause God to abandon the creation project (Psalm 8), so Israel’s constant and humiliating failure did not cause God to abandon the project to rescue the world.
3. Why is it significant that this rescue mission was to be undertaken by a people who were themselves in sore need of the very same rescue? What lesson is there for us?

4. Compare and contrast Psalm 105 and 106. While Psalm 105 celebrates God's choice of Abraham and his family and his deliverance of them from slavery in Egypt, Psalm 106 immediately goes on to tell the dark side of the same story, showing that this rebellion did not stop when Israel reached the Promised Land. (Monday's & Tuesday's lessons)
5. Wednesday's lesson connects Psalm 80 and the Aaronic blessing from Numbers 6:22-27. There are two pictures of God's people: a flock (vv. 1-7) and a vine (vv. 8-19). In the end the psalm exhibits a confident trust in God, who can create a future and who will be the good shepherd. The New Testament presents God's people as sheep in the flock (John 10) and branches in the Vine (John 15). How can we exhibit faithfulness and fruitfulness in our time?
6. Thursday's lesson focuses on Psalm 135. There is a straightforward celebration telling the story of the Exodus and insisting that God is completely different from the idols of the nations. However, there is not merely triumph at past victories but trust for the future ones, implying that Israel will still need rescuing (135:13-14). The tub-thumping Psalm 136 is followed at once by the heart-stopping Psalm 137.
7. These Psalms (78, 105, 106, 135-137) provide a history of betrayal and disobedience, of surprise and deliverance. As we pray these psalms, that history becomes our history. We do not need to romanticize our history. Our history is also a memory of grasping and not trusting and thereby bringing trouble. Such understanding of history is a critique of our usual histories on which we count too heavily, a history of a triumphal church, or imperial nation or an intolerant culture.
8. How can praying these psalms lead us to another, converted identity? What can we do so that "we have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." (LDE 72.1)?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Do you notice Paul's subject, let God be true. In other words, righteous. He's still talking about the character of God, isn't he? Let God be true, even though you've let Him down. "That Thou mayest be justified in Thy words and prevail when Thou art judged." Now, that can be translated in various ways, but among all the versions, the point is clear, as from the Greek, that there have been questions about God, about His character, His truthfulness, His righteousness. Which shows to me, this is the subject of the book. True, he's giving the plan of salvation, God's way of setting us right. But instead of talking about us so much, he talks about God.

Is it God's way of setting us right, to reveal the truth about Himself? Well, in what way are we wrong? Isn't it that we have not had faith in our God? We have not trusted God. We have not been willing to listen. What leads us to trust, and a willingness to listen, but the revelation of the righteousness of God? Then what is God's way of setting us right? Revealing His own

righteousness. So if you translate “the gospel is the truth about God’s own righteousness” that doesn’t leave out the fact that that’s God’s way of making us righteous. But if you translate it “the gospel is God’s way of making us righteous”, you’ve left out the way. You’ve left out the fact that that depends upon our seeing the truth about God. And that’s the heart of the present great theological controversy among us.

There are some who say, “There is no need to reveal the righteousness of God. That’s a given. All we need is 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. And 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. {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)

Further Study with Ellen White

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, “Love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. {AG 54.6}

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. {ML 365.4}

God regards us as His children. He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us

to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. Parents love their children, but the love of God is larger, broader, deeper, than human love can possibly be. It is immeasurable. Then if earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall our Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

{COL 142.1}

He who fed the multitude with five loaves and two small fishes is able today to give us the fruit of our labor. He who said to the fishers of Galilee, "Let down your nets for a draft," and who, as they obeyed, filled their nets till they broke, desires His people to see in this an evidence of what He will do for them today. The God who in the wilderness gave the children of Israel manna from heaven still lives and reigns. He will guide His people and give skill and understanding in the work they are called to do. He will give wisdom to those who strive to do their duty conscientiously and intelligently. He who owns the world is rich in resources, and will bless everyone who is seeking to bless others. {MH 200.2}

From the opening of the great controversy it has been Satan's purpose to misrepresent God's character and to excite rebellion against His law, and this work appears to be crowned with success. The multitudes give ear to Satan's deceptions and set themselves against God. But amid the working of evil, God's purposes move steadily forward to their accomplishment; to all created intelligences He is making manifest His justice and benevolence. . . . {PP 338.2}

It was by deception that Satan seduced angels; thus he has in all ages carried forward his work among men, and he will continue this policy to the last. Should he openly profess to be warring against God and His law, men would beware; but he disguises himself, and mixes truth with error. The most dangerous falsehoods are those that are mingled with truth. It is thus that errors are received that captivate and ruin the soul. By this means Satan carries the world with him. But a day is coming when his triumph will be forever ended. {PP 338.3}

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

So long as the people of God preserve their fidelity to Him, so long as they cling by living faith to Jesus, they are under the protection of heavenly angels, and Satan will not be permitted to exercise his hellish arts upon them to their destruction. {OHC 92.5}

The grace of Christ is not confined to a few. The message of mercy and forgiveness brought from heaven by Christ was to be heard by all. Our Saviour says, "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12). His blessings are universal, reaching to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples. Christ came to break down every wall of partition ... that every soul, whether Jew or Gentile, might be a free worshiper and have access to God.... {TMK 98.2}

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}

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}

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}

Let us keep fresh in our memory all the tender mercies that God has shown us—the tears He has wiped away, the pains He has soothed, the anxieties removed, the fears dispelled, the wants supplied, the blessings bestowed—thus strengthening ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage. {CC 364.3}

We cannot but look forward to new perplexities in the coming conflict, but we may look on what is past as well as on what is to come, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25). The trial will not exceed the strength that shall be given us to bear it. Then let us take up our work just where we find it, believing that whatever may come, strength proportionate to the trial will be given. {CC 364.4}

Christ accepts and communes with the most lowly. He does not accept men because of their capabilities of eloquence, but because they seek His face, desiring His help. His Spirit, moving upon the heart, arouses every faculty to vigorous action. In these unpretentious ones the Lord sees the most precious material, which will stand storm and tempest, heat and pressure. God sees not as man sees. . . . {TDG 227.2}

It is not the will of God that His people should be weighed down with care. But our Lord does not tell us that there are no dangers in our path. He does not propose to take His people out of the world of sin and evil, but He points us to a never-failing refuge. He invites the weary and care-laden, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Lay off the yoke of anxiety and worldly care that you have placed on your own neck, and "take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:28, 29. We may find rest and peace in God, casting all our care upon Him; for He careth for us. See 1 Peter 5:7. {PP 294.1}

It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. By this means faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a

watered garden. His health shall spring forth speedily; his light shall rise in obscurity, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him. {MH 100.3}

No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God. Even on earth we may have joy as a wellspring, never failing, because fed by the streams that flow from the throne of God. {SD 122.4}

The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast. {DA 480.5}

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}

Constantly the heavenly agencies are communicating with men and women on the earth. We cannot see personally the angels of God round about us; nevertheless they are with us, guiding and directing. We are to be so fully under the influence of the Spirit of God that we shall be susceptible to His leadings. {HP 322.4}

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

The Lord's care is over all His creatures. He loves them all and makes no difference, except that He has the most tender pity for those who are called to bear life's heaviest burdens. {FLB 63.2}

The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God. No question of policy influenced His movements. He made no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. That which appealed to His heart was a soul thirsting for the waters of life. {9T 191.1}

Heaven's plan of salvation is broad enough to embrace the whole world. God longs to breathe into prostrate humanity the breath of life. And He will not permit any soul to be disappointed who is sincere in his longing for something higher and nobler than anything the world can offer. Constantly He is sending His angels to those who, while surrounded by circumstances the most discouraging, pray in faith for some power higher than themselves to take possession of them and bring deliverance and peace. In various ways God will reveal Himself to them and will place them in touch with providences that will establish their confidence in the One who has given Himself a ransom for all, "that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." Psalm 78:7. {PK 377.1}

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8. {SC 34.2}

It is that men may understand the joy of forgiveness, the peace of God, that Christ draws them through the manifestation of His love. If they respond to His drawing, yielding their hearts to His grace, He will lead them on step by step, to a full knowledge of Himself, and this is life eternal. {1SM 323.2}

It is not by inherent power that year by year the earth yields its bounties and continues its march around the sun. The hand of the Infinite One is perpetually at work guiding this planet. It is God's power continually exercised that keeps the earth in position in its rotation. It is God who causes the sun to rise in the heavens. He opens the windows of heaven and gives rain. . . . {MH 416.2}

It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears, every flower blooms, every fruit develops. {MH 416.3}

The mechanism of the human body cannot be fully understood; it presents mysteries that baffle the most intelligent. It is not as the result of a mechanism, which, 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. The beating heart, the throbbing pulse, every nerve and muscle in the living organism, is kept in order and activity by the power of an ever-present God. {MH 417.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*

Lesson 11 “Longing for God in Zion”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 84; Revelation 21:3; Psalm 122; Psalm 87; Galatians 3:28, 29; Matthew 28:18–20; Psalm 46; Psalm 125.

Memory Text

“My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God” (Psalm 84:2, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Day in Your Courts Is Better Than a Thousand
- III. Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem
- IV. Zion—The Home of All Nations
- V. Safety and Peace of Zion
- VI. Immovable Like Mount Zion
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The songs of Zion are joyous hymns that magnify the beauty of Zion and the sovereignty of the Lord, who reigns from His holy mountain. These Psalms often praise the merits of the Lord’s house and express a love for the sanctuary that can be found in other Psalms, as well. [...] Zion is a place of divine blessings and refuge. Zion is often referred to in parallel, or even interchangeably with, Jerusalem and the sanctuary, the center of God’s work of salvation for the ancient world.” (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. What does your soul long for the most? Do you sometimes feel like fainting from the intensity of your longing (Psalm 84:2)? Why does the psalmist long to dwell in the sanctuary? What can we learn from psalmist’s longing for God in Zion? (Sunday’s lesson)

3. How do we 'practice the presence of God' in our busy lives of the 21st century? How do we find time for God, make space for Him? Can you testify to the truthfulness of Psalm 84:11-12 in your life?
4. What sentiments do the worshipers associate with their arrival to Jerusalem in the 'psalms of ascent'? These psalms (120-134) were sung by Jewish pilgrims as they traveled up to Jerusalem for the three great feasts. What do they hope to find in Jerusalem? What do they pray for (122:6-9)? (Monday's lesson)
5. Read Psalm 87. What makes Zion such an esteemed place and glorious (87:3-7)? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. While God's ideal was to have one central sanctuary and one main sacrificial site, the historical reality was different. The central sanctuary existed in Gilgal (Joshua 4:18-5:12), Shiloh (Joshua 18:1; 1 Samuel 1:3) as well as in Bethel and Shechem (Joshua 24; cf. Exodus 20:24-26; Deuteronomy 16:21; 27:1-8). So in what sense did God choose Zion (Psalm 87:2; cf. 2 Samuel 5:6-10 & 1 Chronicles 11:4-6)? What lessons can we learn from this history for our time? How can balance be achieved between centralization and faithfulness to God?
7. Read Psalm 46. What reality is poetically depicted here? (Wednesday's lesson) Why would this psalm mean so much to Martin Luther in his darkest moments? According to Ulrich Leupold, "more than any other [psalm it] epitomizes Luther's thought and personal experience" and Heinrich Heine called Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" based on this psalm "the Marseillaise of the Reformation".
8. Read Psalm 125. Both this psalm and Psalm 46 speak about how God protects Jerusalem and will not allow her enemies to prevail. Yet Psalm 74 depicts another reality describing in terrible detail as pagan invaders are tearing the temple to bits (cf. Psalm 78). How did this political reality resonate with people through the long post-exilic centuries when the pagans ruled over Israel?
9. Malachi 3:1 promises, many long years after the Jewish exiles had returned from Babylonian captivity, that God *would* one day return to his temple. Yet, 400 years later, there was no clear sign that this had actually happened.
10. When Jesus finally arrived on the scene, what did he do with the temple? He stopped the sacrificial system, he shut the temple down. Jesus brought the end of the temple's reason for existence. But it was not because God didn't want to dwell with his people anymore (cf. Ex 25:8)!
11. The healing of the blind and the lame (Matthew 21:14 cf. Acts 3) showed that God wants to help his people, even the weakest ones and those on the margin, but in a new way – by creating a community where everyone belongs! In the New Testament, thus the 'house of sacrifice' becomes a 'house of prayer'. People turned the sacrifice into a form of a bribe. Jesus will bring the ultimate sacrifice, not as a bribe to God, but as an expression of God's unchanging love for us. Jesus replaces the house of sacrifice with a house of prayer – not as a new bribe, but as a tool of

hope for everybody! Prayer becomes a tool of participation in what God is doing in our time!

12. Where is the temple now? Where two or three are gathered (Mt 18:20; 1 Cor 3:16-17). How does that fill us with hope and turn us and the community of believers into agents of hope for the world we live in today?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: I hope that everyone has read these first paragraphs in our Bible Reference Sheet, because I think they are so important for the setting. But here in the second paragraph, and in your presentation, you referred to the fact that we will be comfortable with God. You asked the question, “Would we be comfortable, knowing that we are in the presence of Someone who knows everything about us?”

Graham: Even things we may have forgotten ourselves.

Lou: There are no hiding places.

Now, you’ve suggested that we will be comfortable with God, not because God has forgotten all this. And yet God has references in Scripture about how God has taken all our sins and He has put them in the depths of the sea, and He will remember them no more. Wouldn’t it be more reassuring to say, “He has blotted them out and they just don’t figure into any recollection whatsoever”?

Graham: Yes, I think some derive more comfort from the thought that God will be unable to remember, some kind of divine amnesia. And that none of our neighbors and friends, especially our guardian angels, will be able to remember. I think it shows more trust in God to understand that He can remember very well, but He would never haunt us with this memory.

Now a vital reason for not forgetting—the history of the Great Controversy is the history of the evidence upon which God has won that conflict. After He has won it, He will not destroy the evidence, or the conflict could arise again and again and again. And this is why Jesus is pictured as keeping His human form. Remember the wonderful picture of that little girl sitting in Jesus’ lap, and she picks up Jesus’ hand and says, “How did You get this mark?” Will He say, “I don’t know. I’m hoping somebody can tell Me some day”? There’s no point in His keeping His human form if the whole thing has been forgotten.

Moreover, when you think of what would be required, the sins of many saints up there have been recorded in Scripture. Think how many sermons we have preached on David’s sins. In order for all record of sin to be forgotten, all Bibles would have to be destroyed, along with all

memory of its contents. Psalm 51 would have to go, that beautiful prayer for a new heart and a right spirit. You think of all that would be gone.

Lou: But then you're saying these statements about our sins being "blotted out" and "in the depths of the sea," and so on, are God's way of reassuring us that though He knows us that well, He loves us and accepts us just as though we had never sinned.

Graham: We say, "Forgive and forget." Now, evidence for that. My mother knew me very well—as nobody else did. And when I was invited to come to Loma Linda in 1961, she could have come before the Board and said, "You don't want my son. Let me tell you some of the things he has done." I knew my mother would rather die than say such a thing! I knew my reputation was absolutely secure with my mother and with my father. Well, if our reputation is secure with our parents, our reputation is totally secure with God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #13 with Lou Venden, "How God Treats His Erring Children" 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/13MMCAG>*

Lou: We've had quite a number of questions on this subject. It says something about where real concerns lie. "If God's character is love (1 John 4:8) and God loves us so much (John 3:16), why was pain and death so prevalent in the Old and New Testament? And is it God who will actually destroy man in the end? Or is it sin and Satan that causes destruction? If God does destroy, then is this contrary to the Word?"

Graham: And that is so vital, I couldn't live without an answer to those questions, and one should work on them. But I wouldn't want a nice claim in the Bible. "These questions you will find answered on page 721, one, two, three, four, five, six." Those are just claims. It has cost a great deal to answer those questions.

Now on the violence and so forth in the Old Testament, we know we're all caught up in the consequences of this war, and we bring a lot of this on ourselves, to be sure. And the devil is at work. And there are many verses in the Bible that say we reap what we have sown, or maybe God is disciplining those whom He loves. There are many causes of trouble and difficulty. I'd like to look at them all. I don't expect a neat answer to a question like that.

But the big one, "Will God destroy us in the end?" If all God asks of us is love and trust, and if we don't give it to Him, He's going to destroy us in the end? This would be God saying, "You either love Me, or I'll destroy you." And if that's the way He is, I cannot trust Him. I do not care to live with Him. I do not believe He's that way; but it cost the death of Christ to prove it. And we have to go and watch Jesus die. Did the Father destroy His Son? So the cross is the central answer to all of this. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #6 with Lou Venden, "Evaluating the Evidence" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda,

California} To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:
<http://pkp.cc/6MMCAG>

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 May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>*

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

Thus God is able and willing to lead all who will be led. He desires to teach each one a lesson of constant trust, unwavering faith, and unquestioning submission. He says to each one, I am the Lord thy God. Walk with Me, and I will fill thy path with light.... {OHC 24.3}

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}

Our lifework here is a preparation for the life eternal. The education begun here will not be completed in this life; it will be going forward through all eternity—ever progressing, never completed. {Mar 363.3}

Every right principle, every truth learned in an earthly school, will advance us just that much in the heavenly school. As Christ walked and talked with His disciples during His ministry on this earth, so will He teach us in the school above, leading us beside the river of living waters and

revealing to us truths that in this life must remain hidden mysteries because of the limitations of the human mind, so marred by sin. {Mar 363.4}

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. {Mar 363.6}

Jesus is ever ready to speak peace to souls that are burdened with doubts and fears. He waits for us to open the door of the heart to Him, and say, Abide with us. {DA 803.3}

Happiness drawn from earthly sources is as changeable as varying circumstances can make it; but the peace of Christ is a constant and abiding peace. It does not depend upon any circumstances in life, on the amount of worldly goods or the number of earthly friends. Christ is the fountain of living water, and happiness drawn from Him can never fail. {MB 16.2}

The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife. {HP 35.3}

But even here Christians may have the joy of communion with Christ; they may have the light of His love, the perpetual comfort of His presence. Every step in life may bring us closer to Jesus, may give us a deeper experience of His love, and may bring us one step nearer to the blessed home of peace. {FLB 121.5}

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}

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

become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them the children of God. {9T 191.2}

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}

Though He was a Jew, Christ mingled with the Samaritans, setting at naught the Pharisaic customs of His nation. In face of their prejudices, He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate with them at their tables, partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands—and taught in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy. {3SM 238.2}

Jesus sat as an honored guest at the table of the publicans, by His sympathy and social kindness showing that He recognized the dignity of humanity; and men longed to become worthy of His confidence. Upon their thirsty souls His words fell with blessed, life-giving power. New impulses were awakened, and the possibility of a new life opened to these outcasts of society. {3SM 238.3}

In the person of Christ we behold the eternal God engaged in an enterprise of boundless mercy toward fallen man. {FLB 98.3}

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

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

The world is a theater; the actors, its inhabitants, are preparing to act their part in the last great drama. With the great masses of mankind there is no unity, except as men confederate to accomplish their selfish purposes. 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. . . . {8T 27.4}

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. {PK 570.4}

How graciously and tenderly our heavenly Father deals with His children! He preserves them from a thousand dangers to them unseen and guards them from the subtle arts of Satan, lest they should be destroyed. {3T 373.1}

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}

At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. {DA 669.4}

When temptations assail you, when care, perplexity, and darkness seem to surround your soul, look to the place where you last saw the light. Rest in Christ's love and under His protecting care. When sin struggles for the mastery in the heart, when guilt oppresses the soul and burdens the conscience, when unbelief clouds the mind, remember that Christ's grace is sufficient to subdue sin and banish the darkness. Entering into communion with the Saviour, we enter the region of peace. {MH 250.1}

Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. Seek Him as One who desires to be found of you. He desires you not only to touch His garments, but to walk with Him in constant communion. {MH 85.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*

Lesson 12 “Worship That Never Ends”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 134; Isaiah 42:10–12; Revelation 14:3; Psalm 15; Psalm 101:1–3; Psalm 96; Revelation 14:6–12; John 4:23, 24.

Memory Text

“I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being” (Psalm 104:33, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Lift Up Your Hands in the Sanctuary
- III. Sing to the Lord a New Song
- IV. Lord, Who May Abide in Your Tabernacle?
- V. Declare His Glory Among the Nations
- VI. When God Does Not Delight in Sacrifices
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Israel’s primary calling was to praise God and to bear witness about Him to other nations, because the Lord wants all the world to join His people in worship. [...] Praising the Lord in the congregation is perceived as ideal worship. This does not mean that the prayer and praise of the individual in Israel assume a secondary meaning. By contrast, the individual’s worship of God feeds the communal worship with renewed praise (Ps. 22:22, 25), while in turn individual worship develops its fullest potential in close relationship with the community.” (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. Read Psalm 134. The worshipers are depicted as “lifting up hands in the sanctuary”. What is the significance of this (cf. 1 Timothy 2:8)? (Sunday’s lesson) The temple in the ancient world functions as a microcosmos – a little picture of the world. This made perfect sense within the creational and covenantal monotheism of ancient Israel, but it makes little sense in post-Enlightenment thinking.

3. How does the New Testament express the same ideas presented in Psalms (18; 36; 113; 134; 135) and apply them to God's people, the new holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:4, 5)? (Monday's lesson)
4. Singing to the Lord a new song is the common motif in Psalm 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9, and 149:1. What is the meaning and reason for this "new song"? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. How is this metaphor picked up in Isaiah 42:10–12, Revelation 5:9, and 14:3? Why can no one but the 144,000 learn the "new song"? Is it the lyrics, or the tune or something else? There is both a corporate and individual dimension to our worship. How can we ensure that we distinguish them, but that we don't separate them?
6. Read Psalm 15. Who are the people worthy of worshiping in God's presence? "The sanctuary was a holy place, and everything in it, including the priests, was consecrated. Thus, holiness is a mandatory requirement for entering the presence of God. Israel's holiness was to be comprehensive, uniting worship with ethics and exercised in all aspects of life." (Tuesday's lesson)
7. If Psalms 15 & 24 invite us to think of the holiness required to enter God's temple, where do we go to attain it? Is this a case of catch-22, where the solution to a problem is impossible because it is also the cause of the problem? Explain!
8. Read Psalm 96. Singing (vss. 1, 2), praising (vs. 2), bringing gifts (vs. 8), and proclaiming God's goodness and greatness (vss. 3, 4) are not separate actions but are varied expressions of worship. However, Psalm 96 highlights one not so obvious aspect of worship, i.e., the evangelistic dimension in proclaiming the Lord's kingdom to other peoples (vss. 2, 3, 10). (Wednesday's lesson) God who will come to put all things right at last is to be worshiped by the whole earth.
9. How do the psalmists decry various misuses of worship in Psalm 40:6–8; 50:7–23; 51:16–19? (Thursday's lesson) If God does not delight in the sacrifices, why did He prescribe them in His Word (Exodus 20:24)? How do we avoid the trap of thinking that merely knowing truth and going through the rituals of the truth is enough?
10. **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.**
11. Everybody worships somebody or something. Does our worship lift us up or bring us down?
12. The first duty of all created beings is worship. All else flows from our worship and from our perception of who God is. Evangelism is the overflow [consequence] of worship. The church does not exist for its own sake or to impose something on others, but to create a worshipping community of connected people. How can we make it a reality in our own lives and in the communities where we live?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

What I like about this is, the kind of worship God desires is described as rational, intelligent, spiritual worship; not mechanical, not ritualistic, not ceremonial. We worship an intelligent God. He wants us to worship Him in spirit and in truth, Jesus said. So to do something mechanical, learned by rote, is a terrible misrepresentation of the truth about God. Remember Isaiah? “Your worship of Me is but the commandments of men learned by rote.” You come into the temple, but your hearts aren’t in it. Remember the Sabbath keepers in Amos? All that kind of unthinking obedience suggests an unthinking God. {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 link:*

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

And that’s the point, you see, that it is a law that we become like the person we worship and admire. And the number one act of worship is trust. To trust God, and to demonstrate that trust, that admiration for His wise and gracious ways, is really the greatest act of worship we can perform. And as we perform that act of worship in trusting Him and showing that we trust by our admiration and the way we treat each other, that produces the very results that we want. Healing and perfection are the fruit of faith. We’re not just justified by faith; we’re sanctified by faith. Everything comes by faith. Every good thing you can name, it is the result of trusting God. {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/22MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/23MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

A most significant verse about God is in Isaiah 29:13. What was wrong with their worship? They were busy with their worship. Just as when Jesus came, they were never more religious. They tithed, they health-reformed, they kept their Sabbaths, they memorized the scriptures. But it wasn’t doing them any good! Jesus quotes this later on in Isaiah 29:13. “The Lord said: ‘Because this people draw near with their mouth.’” Remember He also says, “Who requires you to trample My courts?” They came, and Amos says they sang a lot. “They honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me.” The heart is where a man does his thinking, his best thinking! Amos continues, “And their fear of Me”, and that is their reverence, their worship of Me, “is but a commandment of men learned by rote.” Unthinking, mechanical worship is an utter insult to our intelligent, gracious God. And it doesn’t do us any good! It destroys us to

simply do these things because we're supposed to. And if we Adventists, when we're asked why we do something or don't do it—if all we can say is, "Well, because God said so, and I believe it, and that's all there is to it," that's something learned by rote. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Isaiah, recorded January 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/33MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/34MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Christ has made provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the light of heaven, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. {8T 19.3}

God would not have His children, for whom so great salvation has been provided, act as if He were a hard, exacting taskmaster. He is their best friend; and when they worship Him, He expects to be with them, to bless and comfort them, filling their hearts with joy and love. {SC 103.2}

God desired to bring all peoples under His merciful rule. He desired that the earth should be filled with joy and peace. He created man for happiness, and He longs to fill human hearts with the peace of heaven. He desires that the families below shall be a symbol of the great family above. {COL 290.2}

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}

We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls. {DA 347.3}

Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. {MH 100.2}

It is the love of God continually transferred to man that enables him to impart light. Into the hearts of all who are united to God by faith the golden oil of love flows freely, to shine out again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God. {COL 418.5}

The Sun of Righteousness did not burst upon the world in splendor, to dazzle the senses with His glory. It is written of Christ, “His going forth is prepared as the morning.” Hosea 6:3. Quietly and gently the daylight breaks upon the earth, dispelling the darkness and waking the world to life. So did the Sun of Righteousness arise, “with healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2. {MH 32.3}

The mighty power of the Holy Spirit works an entire transformation in the character of the human agent, making him a new creature in Christ Jesus. {6BC 1117.17}

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. {MH 479.2}

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}

Christ has given us no promise of help in bearing today the burdens of tomorrow. He has said, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Corinthians 12:9); but, like the manna given in the wilderness, His grace is bestowed daily, for the day’s need. Like the hosts of Israel in their pilgrim life, we may find morning by morning the bread of heaven for the day’s supply. {MB 101.1}

The Lord’s care is over all His creatures. He loves them all and makes no difference, except that He has the most tender pity for those who are called to bear life’s heaviest burdens. . . . {MH 199.3}

By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go. {MH 182.1}

If you ask the help of God, you will not ask in vain. The Lord is at work in many ways to win your hearty confidence. In nothing does He take more delight than to have you unburden, come to Him for light and strength, and He has promised that you shall find rest to your soul. If you will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to hear, and an arm will be reached down to save

you. There is a God that hears prayer, and when all other resources fail, He is your refuge, a very present help in time of trouble. . . . {TDG 184.4}

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

The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. {COL 98.3}

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. {COL 311.4}

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}

Christ might, because of our guilt, have moved far away from us. But instead of moving farther away, He came and dwelt among us, filled with all the fullness of the Godhead, to be one with us, that through His grace we might attain perfection. {RC 17.5}

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}

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man's necessity. He "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses," that He might minister to every need of humanity. Matthew 8:17. The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character. {MH 17.1}

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. {FLB 142.2}

God speaks to us in nature. It is His voice we hear as we gaze upon the beauty and richness of the natural world. We view His glory in the beautiful things His hand has made. We stand and behold His works without a veil between. God has given us these things that in beholding the works of His hands, we may learn of Him. {TDG 241.2}

God has given us these precious things as an expression of His love. The Lord is a lover of the beautiful, and to please and gratify us He has spread before us the beauties of nature, even as an earthly parent seeks to place beautiful things before the children that he loves. The Lord is always pleased to see us happy. Sinful as it is with all its imperfections, the Lord has lavished upon this earth the useful and the beautiful. The beautiful tinted flowers tell of His tenderness and love. They have a language of their own, reminding us of the Giver. {TDG 241.3}

The truth is all powerful and far reaching. It will unite nationalities in one great brotherhood. . . . Christ in men unites them on one grand platform, preparing for the uniting in one family in heaven. It is the truth that makes men one and removes national prejudice. . . . {OHC 171.4}

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}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2024: *The Book of Psalms*

Lesson 13 “Wait on the Lord”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 27:14; Romans 8:18–25; Psalm 131; Matthew 18:3; Psalm 126; Psalm 92; Mark 16:1–8; 2 Peter 1:19.

Memory Text

“Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!” (Psalm 27:14, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Call of Waiting
- III. Peace of a Weaned Child
- IV. Bringing in the Sheaves
- V. Waiting in God’s Sabbath Rest
- VI. Joy Comes in the Morning
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The journey continues, though, as we live in the hope of the Lord’s coming, when our longing for God will find its ultimate fulfillment. If there is a final word that we can draw from the Psalms, it should be ‘wait on the Lord.’ Waiting on the Lord is not an idle and desperate biding of one’s time. Instead, waiting on the Lord is an act full of trust and faith, a trust and faith revealed in action. Waiting on the Lord transforms our gloomy evenings with the expectancy of the bright morning (Ps. 30:5, Ps. 143:8). It strengthens our hearts with renewed hope and peace. It motivates us to work harder, bringing in the sheaves of plentiful harvest from the Lord’s mission fields (Ps. 126:6, Matt. 9:36–38). Waiting on the Lord will never put us to shame, but will be richly rewarded, because the Lord is faithful to all His promises (Ps. 37:7–11, 18, 34; Ps. 71:1; Ps. 119:137, 138).” (Sabbath Afternoon)

2. Why do so many Bible texts implore God's people to wait (Psalm 27:14; 37:7, 9, 34; 39:7; 40:1; 69:6; Galatians 5:5; Romans 8:18–25)? (Sunday's lesson) According to some, the people are commanded to "Wait on the Lord" forty-three times in the Old Testament
3. Lewis Smedes puts it like this: "Waiting is our destiny. As creatures who cannot by themselves bring about what they hope for, we wait in the darkness for a flame we cannot light. We wait in fear for a happy ending that we cannot write. We wait for a 'not yet' that feels like a 'not ever.'"
4. Read Psalm 131. What does this psalm teach us about our relationship with God? (Monday's lesson)
5. To wait for something is to recognize I am not in control. I am not calling the shots; the timing is not up to me. In our society, there is a direct correlation between status and waiting. The higher your status, the less you need to wait. Waiting reminds us that we are not in charge. We are created beings. But we are not waiting passively we are waiting on God. And meanwhile, God is doing something in us.
6. Read Psalm 126. What gives strength and hope to God's people? (Tuesday's lesson) How does the seed time and harvest remind us about the reality of the old world, sown in sorrow and fear and the new world, reaped in joy and triumph?
7. Read Psalm 92. How does the Sabbath day highlight the blessings of waiting? (Wednesday's lesson) In what ways can we thank the Lord for old age rather than complaining about it(92:10-15)?
8. What metaphor is symbolically portrayed as the time of divine redemption in Psalm 5:3, 30:5; 49:14; 59:16; 92:2; 119:147; cf. 2 Peter 1:19; Revelation 22:16)? (Thursday's lesson) How is this significant to our understanding of God's threshold of time?
9. Waiting is the expression and the hardest work of hope. What God does in us while we wait is as important as what we are waiting for. Waiting is part of the process of becoming what God wants us to be. Waiting on the Lord requires patient trust that God knows what he is doing.
10. What difference does 13 weeks of studying the book of Psalms make for you? What lessons will you take personally and for the community of believers that you are part of?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

If you were ever asked to explain why you obey God (assuming that you do), what answer would you give? Would you say, “I do what I do as a believer, because God has told me to and He has the power to reward and destroy”? Is that why you don’t lie and murder? Nothing wrong in those things themselves, but it upsets God when you do that—and that is a dangerous thing to do. This might be all right for a beginner or for a little child, but it makes God’s laws seem so arbitrary. They have no sense in themselves. That kind of obedience does not speak well and truly about our God.

Would you rather say, “I do what I do as a believer, because God has told me to, and I love Him and want to please Him”? Is that why you don’t steal or commit adultery? It is not that you see anything wrong in these things in themselves, it’s just that God doesn’t like it when we do that. He has been so good to us, surely we owe it to Him to do the things He has asked us to do, whether they make sense or not. Again, this does not speak well of God. It might be a little improvement from obeying out of fear or desire for reward. But it still smacks of arbitrariness. It still does not speak well of God, though that is often thought to be the antidote for the first one.

Could you say this? “I do what I do because more and more I am finding it to be right and sensible to do so. How I admire and revere the one who so advised me and even commanded me in the days of my ignorance and immaturity,” hastening to add, “being still somewhat ignorant and immature, I am willing to listen to this God and to heed His commandments when He asks me to do something beyond my present understanding.” That says that God is not arbitrary, but that everything He has asked us to do makes such good sense, we should want to do it anyway. If you can say that, then truly God’s law is not a threat to your freedom, and you thank Him for it. {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>

Lou: But I worry a little. For example, one of the questions that came in early in our series: “You’ve made it so complicated. There is so much to think about: justification, sanctification, and all of this. If what really is at stake is simply trusting God, why isn’t it enough to say, ‘I’m going to have the faith of a little child? I’ll just trust God, and don’t bother me with all the rest of this’”?

Graham: But don’t underestimate the faith of a little child. The faith of a little child implies he’s really willing to listen. So if we really have the faith of a little child, we are willing to listen and

to be trusting, which by the way is why a little child needs protection, because he's too willing to trust anybody. So he needs protection. But on the good side, the faith of a little child is wonderful. Why, I have all my grandchildren home visiting right now. I love it. And they will sit there and listen and believe anything Grandpa says. I could get away with murder, you know, but I won't do it. But to have them sit and look and hang on every word is beautiful. I love it. Well, if we have the faith of a little child we're sitting there listening to God and saying, "Tell me. Tell me more. Tell me more." Look, there's no way to have the faith of a little child without following along and sanctification will come with it and we'll be healed. There's no way to avoid it.

Lou: As I remember the little children in our house, they were trusting, but they also loved to ask why.

Graham: Oh, that's part of the faith of a little child.

Lou: They are eager to grow.

Graham: Yes. I love that. {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>*

Because truth and evidence are not on the adversary's side, Satan cannot use evidence. He cannot dare invite inquiry and investigation, as God can with perfect safety and freedom. In order to win his case, the Devil always has to use things like counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders to persuade. Are you impressed with how much of this is going on at the present time?

Now people who survive this period of extreme deception and confusion are certainly not babes in the truth. Rather, they are grown-up, adult believers. They meet the biblical description from an earlier conversation, "God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done," of perfection and Christian maturity. These are people who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil. Though their faith be severely tried, they will never let God down. They have more than the faith of a little child. They still have that. But when one has the faith of a little child, he still needs much protection. These saints, like Job, can stand alone.

I understand that God is waiting for such firm believers. He waits in mercy because He loves His children. He is not willing that any of them should be lost. God knows that if these final, awesome, closing events should be allowed to come too soon, His children would be unready. They would be confused, and some deceived. You recall from an earlier conversation, He would

never allow anyone to be tested more than He is able to bear. Of course, He waits. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18, "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: Our theme tonight, "How Soon Will the Conflict be Over?" takes me back to an event this week in which you led in our thinking at a funeral service. And I was impressed, Graham, with your assurance to all of us, the family and to those of us who had come, with your conviction about the nearness. He is coming soon. Won't you comment just a bit more, review that for us? What do you mean when you say that? I remember you preaching up at Mountain View when I was pastor there, "How near is near?" And this is a number of years later, and here's the same note.

Graham: By the way, I used that title about forty years ago up at Pacific Union College: "How Near is Near?" I think historically the great event that is coming is just around the corner, because what needs to be done could be done. And I think the increase of knowledge which is in Daniel 12:4 is occurring. Look at the technology now for communicating with the whole world, incredible technology.

It may be possible to communicate with the whole world and give them this picture. 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 with Lou Venden, “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>*

Further Study with Ellen White

We may bring Him our little cares and perplexities as well as our greater troubles. Whatever arises to disturb or distress us, we should take it to the Lord in prayer. {FLB 225.5}

Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him. If you will leave yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him that has loved you. {SC 71.2}

Remember that underneath you are the everlasting arms. “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him” (Psalm 37:7). He is guiding you into a harbor of gracious experience. {HP 269.5}

The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God. {FLB 184.6}

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 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}

Christ’s two days’ delay after hearing that Lazarus was sick was not a neglect or a denial on His part. . . . This should be an encouragement to us. . . . We are to rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. The answer to our prayers may not come as quickly as we desire, and it may not be just what we have asked; but He who knows what is for the highest good of His children will bestow a much greater good than we have asked, if we do not become faithless and discouraged. {SD 92.2}

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}

And he brings forth fruit “with patience.” None who receive God’s word are exempt from difficulty and trial; but when affliction comes, the true Christian does not become restless, distrustful, or despondent. Though we can not see the definite outcome of affairs, or discern the purpose of God’s providences, we are not to cast away our confidence. Remembering the tender mercies of the Lord, we should cast our care upon Him, and with patience wait for His salvation. {COL 60.4}

God has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. He provides opportunities and opens channels of working. If His people are watching the indications of His providence, and are ready to cooperate with Him, they will see mighty results. {PK 660.3}

The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God’s unwillingness to have His people perish, has been the reason of so long delay.— *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194. (1868) {Ev 694.2}

By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord’s return.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 633. (1898) {Ev 696.4}

And while Christ opens heaven to man, the life which He imparts opens the heart of man to heaven. Sin not only shuts us away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. All this work of evil it is Christ’s mission to undo. The faculties of the soul, paralyzed by sin, the darkened mind, the perverted will, He has power to invigorate and to restore. He opens to us the riches of the universe, and by Him the power to discern and to appropriate these treasures is imparted. {Ed 28.3}

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 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}

After His resurrection Jesus appeared to His disciples on the way to Emmaus, and, “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things

concerning Himself.” Luke 24:27. The hearts of the disciples were stirred. Faith was kindled. They were “begotten again into a lively hope” even before Jesus revealed Himself to them. It was His purpose to enlighten their understanding and to fasten their faith upon the “sure word of prophecy.” He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not merely because it was supported by His personal testimony, but because of the unquestionable evidence presented by the symbols and shadows of the typical law, and by the prophecies of the Old Testament. It was needful for the followers of Christ to have an intelligent faith, not only in their own behalf, but that they might carry the knowledge of Christ to the world. {GC 349.1}

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 purposes to pass.—*Manuscript 118, 1902.* {Ev 65.2}