

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2014: *Discipleship*

Lesson 1 “Disciples *and* Scripture”

Read for this week’s study

Luke 4:1–12; Matt. 12:3–8; Matt. 5:17–39; Luke 24:13–32; Acts 1:16–20.

Memory Text

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Jesus and the Bible
- III. The Authority of Scripture
- IV. Public Proclamation
- V. Personal Ministry
- VI. The Next Generation
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Daniel Duda

1. “The topic of our quarter is *discipleship*. Though the term has many facets, in this study we will look at discipleship as the process by which we become followers of Jesus and, as such, better soul-winners. After all, Jesus is every Christian’s example, especially in the work of soul-winning. Is it illogical to suppose that the keys to effective evangelism are discovered in popular psychology, mass-marketing techniques, and elaborate promotional programs rather than in the following of the simple example of Christ?” (Study guide introduction) What is the primary purpose of discipleship? What role can or should psychology, marketing, and/or promotion play in what we do?
2. Jesus didn’t send his disciples into the world to grow churches, or even to convert people. He sent them out to make disciples (Matt. 28:16–20). Nearly 2,000 years later, does the central task for His followers remain the same?
3. “Following Jesus vastly exceeds the limiting view that discipleship equals methods for correcting aberrant behaviors and habits, however important these changes are. A comprehensive understanding of discipleship is incomplete until it incorporates a passionate desire to follow Jesus and, as a supernatural result, a passionate desire to

- lead others to Christ, as well.” (Study guide introduction) Why are limiting views of discipleship so dangerous?
4. “Explicitly and implicitly Jesus incorporated Scripture into His disciple-making methodology. The ultimate “treasure quest” was rooted in the prophetic writings, which pointed to Him. Thus, to miss Jesus is to miss the mark. All this means, then, is that all our disciple-making endeavors must, ultimately, be about Jesus and that which He has done for us.” (Sabbath afternoon) The well-known and often quoted text from John 5:39 is our memory text for this lesson. What is the primary purpose of the Scripture? If Jesus is the “treasure”, how do you “hunt” for Him in the prophetic writings? What about the other parts of the Bible? The Bible doesn’t consist only of prophecies about the Messiah. Why? What is the significance of this fact?
 5. “Because Jesus is the example for all believers, His level of commitment to Scripture becomes more than a matter of passing interest. “ (Sunday’s lesson) If Jesus is our example, does that mean that we should never get married, wear a beard and walk in a toga, not trousers? On what basis do you determine in which areas of life Jesus is your example?
 6. What is the significance of Jesus quoting the Scripture in His wilderness temptation experience (Luke 4:1-21)?
 7. In what ways is the Bible authoritative? What does that mean for us today?
 8. “Whenever Christ debated with the religious authorities, He relied not on abstract philosophy, not even on personal authority, but on the teachings of Scripture.” (Monday’s lesson) Compare this with Matthew 5:17-39 used in Tuesday’s lesson. What can we learn about the authority that a) Scripture has, b) Christ had, c) We have?
 9. What is the significance of Jesus using Scripture in His personal encounters (John 13:18-20; Luke 10:25-28; 24:13-32)? What is the significance of His question: How do you read it? What influences what we read into the Bible today? Are you aware of the influences that you are under in our present age? “During Christ’s earthly sojourn, the ordinary Israelites’ relationship with Scripture was apparently highly legalistic. They looked to Scripture for regulations and ethical guidance. Upright behavior was considered the payment for eternal bliss. Jesus, however, overturned their legalistic notions and substituted heart-based religion for a system of external controls.” (Tuesday’s lesson)
 10. Read Matthew 12:15–21, Mark 1:1–3, Acts 1:16–20, 3:22–24, and Romans 10:10. What do these texts tell us about the ways in which the earliest Christians viewed Scripture? What lessons can we take from them for ourselves and how we relate to the Bible?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

As I understand it, to understand and present the plan of Salvation in the setting of the great controversy over the character of God is Adventism's highest privilege and unique assignment as the conflict in God's family comes to its awesome and triumphant end. Now at the same time, it is understandable that as sinners we may tend at first to be preoccupied with our own salvation, with what God has done for us. And that is terribly important, isn't it? But as we learn to view the Scriptures as a whole it becomes apparent that our personal salvation is only part of a far larger plan that involves the peace and security of the whole vast universe. The confirmation of the truth about God Himself, the same truth that wins us to repentance and faith is the truth that confirms the faith of the loyal ones and protects the universe from apostasy and defection for eternity. And that truth is not about us, that truth is about God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Understanding the Mission of the Church, number 1, recorded September, 1983, Camp AuSable, Michigan} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMUTMOTC>*

So, if on the basis of the Bible we build a whole model, say, a philosophy, a system of thought, a system of understanding, Ellen White even uses the term "biblical theology". The Bible contains a complete system of theology into which we can fit all the parts. There's a great strength in this. But if in your model there are all together too many pieces in Scripture that will not fit then either you have the wrong model or you're reading the passages wrong. And so when an individual will say of too many passages in the Bible, "I don't know what to do with those" then he may be commenting on his model. And when folk will say of stunning statements in Ellen White, "I don't know what to do with those" once again I think we need to take a look at our model or re-read the passage. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from audio series, "Understanding the Mission of the Church" #1, recorded September 1983, Camp AuSable, MI} {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Understanding the Mission of the Church, number 1, recorded September, 1983, Camp AuSable, Michigan} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMUTMOTC>*

As we learn to view the Scriptures as a whole, and stop selecting here a little and there a little; I don't know where that got started. Every church that uses the Bible has a collection of "littles". But we Adventists say we have the best collection of littles. But nobody's going to concede that. The strength of our persuasion depends upon us saying we do not collect littles anymore, we come to you with the entire Bible; all 66 books. And as we learn to view the scriptures as a whole like this, it becomes apparent that our own personal salvation is only part of a far larger plan that involves the peace and the freedom and the security of the whole vast universe. And that is the confirmation of the truth about our God Himself. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Larger View, part 1, recorded October, 1982, Monterey, California} *To*

listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:
<http://pkp.cc/1MMLVIEW>

How Jesus must have been tempted to use His power when He was winning so few. He knew the people were expecting a Messiah who would come with great physical power to drive off their enemies and establish an earthly kingdom. But He wouldn't do it. It would have misrepresented the truth and God's way of exercising His authority. Did Jesus base His authority on His loud voice and bombastic manner, as is so customary of many evangelists today? Just read the gospels. The people marveled at the gracious words that came from His lips. "Blessed are the humble in spirit. Blessed are the meek." You simply cannot shout those words. People who shout don't teach things like that. Christ's manner of speaking must have been as music to His audiences.

Well, was His authority based on who He was? He was the Son of God, the Creator of the universe, worshiped by all the angels. Remember the story of Emmaus. He didn't reveal who He was until He had led them through the Scriptures and until their decision was based on evidence, not on His authority as a person. Yet, think what person He was. There is a marvelous understanding of the Emmaus road experience that I put at the end of the Bible Reference Sheet, written by a writer I greatly respect. May I read it? Jesus did not reveal Himself in His true character to them, and then open the Scriptures to their minds.

He maintained His disguise till He had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in His life, His character, His mission to earth, and His death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not because it was supported by His personal testimony, [though He was God] but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of His life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. Then, when the object of His labors with the two disciples was gained, He revealed Himself to them. . . . E.G. White, 1878. {3SP 214.2}

You see, **Jesus spoke with authority, I believe, because He always told the truth. And some perceived it to be true. To them He spoke with great authority. But, you see, He did not speak to everyone with authority. Some said He had a devil, to be so presenting His Father. Only to those who recognized that Jesus spoke in full harmony with all the truth revealed up to that time in God's Word; only to them did Jesus speak with authority.** And when John the Baptist received the report of what Jesus was saying and doing, he said, "That fits Isaiah perfectly. Yes, He is the one."

The ultimate authority then is the truth. God's only means of persuasion. The only safe basis for our trust. And so in many and various ways, God has revealed the truth to us and then has invited our questions and our examination of Him, the Infinite One. **For three and a half years God lived among us to demonstrate His way of using and exercising authority and power. A**

few people respected Him. Many people despised Him as weak, just as the Old Testament had predicted they would. They were looking for someone who would lead them mightily against their enemies. They wanted miracles. They wanted free food and free healing. They didn't want the kind of person the real Messiah proved to be. Nor did they like His picture of the Father. But some did. Some recognized gentle Jesus as the Supreme authority. I think that's why Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the meek." Not blessed are the weak, but blessed are the meek. Meekness is not weakness, though it is so widely misunderstood that way. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Because, you see, only the meek, only the gentle, would be safe to admit to the kingdom, the kind of kingdom that will be governed the way Jesus exercised His authority and power during those three and a half years. Or do you think He'll change His methods in the hereafter? He thundered many times in the Old Testament. Those were all emergency measures. For three and a half precious years, He ran His kingdom on this planet the way He will for eternity. It didn't work, did it? It worked for a few. It worked with the meek. They loved it. And the poor people heard Him gladly. But most people did not appreciate this kind of government. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

Which raises the question with us. Which kind of government do we prefer? Under which kind of government do we feel most secure; a powerful tyranny or the gentle exercise of authority and power that Jesus demonstrated for three and a half years? Obviously it would not be safe to admit people who do not respect the authority of truth spoken softly in love. Blessed indeed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

I prefer a God, myself, who is infinitely powerful, to be sure, but an equally gracious person who values nothing higher than the freedom, and the dignity, and the individuality of His intelligent creatures that our love, our trust, our worship, our willingness to listen and obey, may be freely given. It would be a pleasure to live with a God like that. That is the quality of life in the hereafter that has been held out for us. We can waste it if we wish or we can be convinced by the evidence that this is the kind of person our God really is. We can find Him worthy of our trust. Personally I am convinced that God has more than amply demonstrated that He is precisely this kind of a God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 7, "The Question of Authority" recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

In the Bible the will of God is revealed. The truths of the Word of God are 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. The words, “A new heart also will I give you,” mean, “A new mind will I give you.” A change of heart is always attended by a clear conviction of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher plane of intelligence. {RH, December 18, 1913 par. 8}

It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light, and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought, and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help, we are to form our opinions for ourselves, as we are to answer for ourselves before God. {RH, June 28, 1906 par. 7}

Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, April 13, 1891. {1SM 43.2}

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

The Bible contains a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. {RH, June 11, 1908 par. 4}

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}

Satan has ability to suggest doubts and devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue and mark of intelligence in them to be unbelieving and questioning, and quibbling. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and teachable spirit. All should decide from the weight of evidence. {RH, September 16, 1873 par. 10}

Young men should search the Scriptures for themselves. They are not to feel that it is sufficient for those older in experience to find out the truth; that the younger ones can accept it from them as authority. . . {GW92 128.4}

We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion

for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God. {GW92 129.2}

Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. . . . {4SP 413.3}

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. . . . Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. {Ed 17.2}

All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. We must know what is the voice of God, that we may live by every word that proceeds out of his mouth. We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. We must search the Scriptures carefully with a heart open to the reception of light and the evidences of truth. We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures. {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}

But beware of rejecting that which is truth. The great danger with our people has been that of depending upon men and making flesh their arm. Those who have not been in the habit of searching the Bible for themselves, or weighing evidence, have confidence in the leading men and accept the decisions they make; and thus many will reject the very messages God sends to His people, if these leading brethren do not accept them. {TM 106.4}

The Bible with its precious gems of truth was not written for the scholar alone. On the contrary, it was designed for the common people; and the interpretation given by the common people, when aided by the Holy Spirit, accords best with the truth as it is in Jesus. The great truths necessary for salvation are made clear as the noonday, and none will mistake and lose their

way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God. {5T 331.2}

The Holy Spirit loves to address the youth, and to discover to them the treasures and beauties of God's word. The promises spoken by the great Teacher will captivate the senses and animate the soul with spiritual power that is divine. There will grow in the fruitful mind a familiarity with divine things that will be as a barricade against temptation. {COL 132.3}

The search for truth will reward the seeker at every turn, and each discovery will open up richer fields for his investigation. Men are changed in accordance with what they contemplate. If commonplace thoughts and affairs take up the attention, the man will be commonplace. If he is too negligent to obtain anything but a superficial understanding of God's truth, he will not receive the rich blessings that God would be pleased to bestow upon him. It is a law of the mind, that it will narrow or expand to the dimensions of the things with which it becomes familiar. {MYP 262.1}

The mental powers will surely become contracted, and will lose their ability to grasp the deep meanings of the word of God, unless they are put vigorously and persistently to the task of searching for truth. The mind will enlarge, if it is employed in tracing out the relation of the subjects of the Bible, comparing scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual. Go below the surface; the richest treasures of thought are waiting for the skillful and diligent student.—*Review and Herald*, July 17, 1888. {MYP 262.2}

The knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is the knowledge that all who are saved must have. This is the knowledge that works transformation of character. Received into the life, it will re-create the soul in the image of Christ. This is the knowledge that God invites His children to receive, beside which all else is vanity and nothingness. {AA 475.1}

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life.” To search means to look diligently for something which has been lost. Search for the hidden treasures in God's word. You cannot afford to be without them. Study the difficult passages, comparing verse with verse, and you will find that scripture is the key which unlocks scripture. {MYP 259.1}

Those who prayerfully study the Bible go from each search wiser than they were before. Some of their difficulties have been solved; for the Holy Spirit has done the work spoken of in the fourteenth chapter of John: “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” {MYP 259.2}

The servants of Christ were to prepare no set speech to present when brought to trial. Their preparation was to be made day by day in treasuring up the precious truths of God's word, and through prayer strengthening their faith. When they were brought into trial, the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance the very truths that would be needed. {DA 355.1}

A daily, earnest striving to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, would bring power and efficiency to the soul. The knowledge obtained by diligent searching of the Scriptures would be flashed into the memory at the right time. But if any had neglected to acquaint themselves with the words of Christ, if they had never tested the power of His grace in trial, they could not expect that the Holy Spirit would bring His words to their remembrance. They were to serve God daily with undivided affection, and then trust Him. {DA 355.2}

The student of the Bible should be taught to approach it in the spirit of a learner. We are to search its pages, not for proof to sustain our opinions, but in order to know what God says. {Ed 189.1}

A true knowledge of the Bible can be gained only through the aid of that Spirit by whom the word was given. And in order to gain this knowledge we must live by it. All that God's word commands, we are to obey. All that it promises, we may claim. The life which it enjoins is the life that, through its power, we are to live. Only as the Bible is thus held can it be studied effectively. {Ed 189.2}

The study of the Bible demands our most diligent effort and persevering thought. As the miner digs for the golden treasure in the earth, so earnestly, persistently, must we seek for the treasure of God's word. {Ed 189.3}