

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**Second Quarter 2014: *Christ and His Law***  
**Lesson 13 “Christ’s Kingdom *and the Law*”**

**Read for this week’s study**

Matt. 4:8, 9; Dan. 2:44; 1 Pet. 2:11; 1 Cor. 6:9–11; Rev. 22:14, 15; 1 Cor. 15:26.

**Memory Text**

“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people’ ” (Jeremiah 31:33, NKJV).

**Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide**

- I. Introduction
- II. The Kingdom of God
- III. Citizens of the Kingdom
- IV. Faith and the Law
- V. The Everlasting Kingdom
- VI. The Law in the Kingdom
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Moderator: Daniel Duda**

1. “This week we’ll look at the question of God’s eternal kingdom and the role of the law in relation to it.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Ephesians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Matthew 4:8, 9. What do these verses tell us about Satan’s power in this world? “Through violating God’s law, Adam forfeited his right to earthly sovereignty, and ownership went to the archenemy, Satan. When the representatives from the other worlds gathered before God during the time of the patriarchs, it was Satan who appeared as the ‘delegate’ from earth (Job 1:6). [...] Jesus came to take the world back from Satan, but He could do so only at the cost of His life.” (Sunday’s lesson) How did Jesus “take the kingdom back” from Satan? What is the kingdom of God all about?
3. Monday’s lesson deals with Citizens of the Kingdom: “There’s no such thing as dual citizenship in the great controversy. We are on one side or the other. The kingdom of evil has been battling the kingdom of righteousness for millennia, and it is impossible for a person to be faithful to both at the same time. We all have to make

- a choice about whose kingdom will have our allegiance.” Is this a once for all decision? And if not, what role does the law play in it?
4. “Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and Revelation 22:14, 15. Who gets into God’s kingdom, who stays out, and why? What role does God’s law play here? (Tuesday’s lesson)
  5. “It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven: they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 18.” (Tuesday’s lesson) Why is it important that there is no arbitrariness on God’s part? How does that relate to the final end of sin and sinners?
  6. Wednesday’s lesson deals with the question: “Could evil arise again?” Does the fact that God’s new kingdom is called “everlasting” mean that evil will not rise again? When talking about the fires of hell, we argue that “everlasting” does not necessarily mean “without end”. Is it safe, then, to use the same word and argue that evil will not rise again? Why? Or why not?
  7. “Whether rebellion could occur is really a moot point. The fact is, it won’t.” (Wednesday’s lesson) Surely, Christians believe that. However, if one believes in a Great Controversy, it implies that God will win because he revealed his character, not because he used his power to destroy evil and the Devil. But how is the revelation of God’s character a guarantee that evil will not arise again?
  8. “The Messianic kingdom will be comprised of people who maintained loyalty to God throughout their religious experience. In the face of persecution and personal struggles, they chose the path of obedience and demonstrated their willingness to live lives of divine service.” (Wednesday’s lesson) Didn’t Lucifer show loyalty to God at one point in his life? Yet later he defected. How do we know that the redeemed people will not do the same?
  9. Thursday’s lesson goes to great lengths to emphasize: “With this in mind, the absence of death and sin in the kingdom of God does not require the absence of the law. Just as the law of gravity is necessary for the harmonious interaction between the physical elements of the universe, God’s moral law is needed to govern the righteous interaction between the saints. When God inscribes His law in the hearts of the redeemed, His sole purpose is to seal their decision to walk in the way of righteousness for eternity. Consequently, His law becomes the very essence of His kingdom. So, we have every reason to believe that the principles of God’s moral law will exist in God’s eternal kingdom.” (Thursday’s lesson)
  10. It is interesting that the previous paragraph quotes Ellen White saying: “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.”—Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 109. So the

angels serve as sons, yet for the redeemed “God’s moral law is needed to govern the righteous interaction between the saints”!

11. Thursday’s lesson quotes 1 Corinthians 15:26 about death being destroyed as the last enemy. Surely that is a glorious promise that all of us are looking forward to! Why not quote also verse 24: “Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.” How is the law exercising its power, if all authority and power is destroyed? Why is this text so crucial for understanding God’s character and his victory in the Great Controversy?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Could you say, “I do what I do because God has told me to, and He has the power to reward and destroy”? Is this why you don’t murder or commit adultery, because God has said you mustn’t? You would otherwise, but you can’t afford to incur His displeasure.

This might be all right for a beginner or a little child, but it suggests that God’s laws are arbitrary and do not make good sense in themselves. That does not speak very favorably of 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 this why you don’t steal or tell lies? You would see nothing wrong or harmful about doing these things, it is just that you want so much to please God. For some reason He does not like it when you steal or lie, and since He has been so good to us, you feel under some obligation to please Him. It would only be grateful and fair.

Again, this might be all right for a beginner or a child. It might even be progress beyond the obedience prompted only by fear of punishment and desire of reward. But it still implies an arbitrariness in God’s commandments and does not speak so well of His character and government.

There is another possible approach to obedience. Could you say this? “I do what I do because I have found it to be right and sensible to do so, and I have increasing admiration and reverence for the One who so advised and commanded me in the days of my ignorance and immaturity.” Then hastening to add, “Being still somewhat ignorant and immature, I am willing to trust and obey the One whose counsel has always proved to be so sensible, when He commands me to do something beyond my present understanding.” {Maxwell, Graham. *I Want to Be Free*, 34-35 Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California 1970}

And all Job was left with, no rewards at all, all he said is, “As I know God, I don’t know why this is happening. It doesn’t make sense. It doesn’t fit in with what I know about Him so far. But one thing does fit in. I’m sure if you’d be quiet long enough and let me talk to God, and if He would come from wherever He is and talk to me, I’m sure we could work this out and it would make sense.”

And he was absolutely right. Because where is the “make sense”? It’s in Job 1 and 2.

You see, if you know about the great controversy, it makes sense. If you know about Satan being the accuser and God being the defender, if you know about the universe watching and God saying, “Let Me show you a really trustworthy friend. I will let Satan test him to the limit, and he won’t let Me down.”

See, Job didn’t know that. But he wasn’t afraid to talk to God. He knew God that well. He had the same confidence Abraham did, that it would make sense.

Does the book make sense to you, as you look back over the whole great controversy and see Job in it? Job is one of the most highly honored men in the history of the planet. Magnificent his faith in God, and the intensity of his relationship with God. And when it was broken up, it nearly killed him.

As Christ felt his unity with the Father broken up, He feared that in His human nature He would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the powers of darkness. Having made the decision, He fell dying to the ground.

Job had that kind of a relationship with God. He couldn’t take it as far as Jesus did. But look how far he went! Magnificent! See, when we think of perfection, we think of all kinds of behaviors. Whereas what God wants the most is this kind of a relationship with Him that will see us through the time of trouble that’s coming.

To be perfect doesn’t even mean to have perfect health, desirable as that is. When did Job bear his incredible witness to God? When he was deathly sick and covered with boils! And if any of us here are not at all well, and maybe never will be very well again, don’t say, “I can never have the faith of Job; I can never bear this kind of witness about God.”

A man covered with boils is the only man in the Bible who has this compliment. I’m sure others may have deserved it, but this compliment is expressed, “Job has said of Me what is right” off the dung heap, covered with boils, deathly ill. So nobody needs to feel shut out for this.

And you know, during the time of trouble, much as we may have worked to preserve our health, some of us may be in dreadful physical circumstances! Can you imagine? Without food and drink, and who knows what the circumstances are? Maybe tied up in prison; haven’t jogged around the block in months! And yet one could bear this witness.

See, we have to be very careful of what we include in perfection! Until this emergency period is over, the essence of this maturity and perfection that God wants is this conviction, this being settled into the truth about Him so intellectually and spiritually that we cannot be moved, even if everything is taken away. I see that as the essential quality of character of those who are described as having the character of Christ reproduced in them.

We rather see them moving with poise and grace through life, never ruffled, and so on. That's perfection. Well, that is one aspect. But what do you do during an emergency? Jesus was so smitten by this awful experience of His Father not communicating with Him in Gethsemane or on the cross that He fell dying to the ground in Gethsemane and expired on the cross. And He cried out in anguish, and was filled with fear, even despair, *Desire of Ages* says. But He didn't let it overcome Him.

Is that not the essence of this thing? So I believe our picture of God and our decision about and our commitment to it, that this is something I'd stake my life on! He could even slay me, and I would still trust Him. (Job 13:5) This is the essential quality of perfection that is mentioned in the scriptures. Not that we obey 5,999 rules to perfection. It isn't that! We might even be sick. We might even be crying out. We might even be expressing despair momentarily, and God is saying, "There's a really grown up saint surviving the time of trouble!"

I think Job is a real example of this and should be very encouraging to us in all ages and all conditions. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Esther & Job*, recorded March, 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)

In the fullness of time, things were at their worst on this planet—though in contrast, God at last had a group of the most devout seventh-day Sabbath keeping, tithe-paying, health reformers the world had ever seen up to that time. He had that marvelous contrast; the world never so wicked, a group never apparently so obedient, and He came. And the obedient ones killed Him. That said something about the quality of their obedience. They were doing it for the wrong reason. And the universe looking on saw Jesus die. Did they see the Father executing His Son? If you believe the Father executed the Son, and that therefore He will execute the wicked at the end, then you get one answer to your question. If you stand on Calvary and say, "God, I don't see you executing your Son. I hear the Son crying out 'How can you give me up.' And I remember Romans 1; that's what you do to people who prefer the lies about you, and won't let you heal them. You give them up. You're giving up your Son as if He were a rebel, to show how you will give up rebels in the end. But God, you sent Hosea to illustrate how you feel when you give people up. And so in the shadows I hear you crying over your Son, 'How can I give you up? How can I let you go?'"

Ellen White stood in imagination at the foot of the cross, and was able to write that the Father suffered so with the Son, that you could say that God was crucified with the Son. No one else has ever died that death. It is the only time the universe has ever seen this evidence. For the

first time, they learned that it is true in God's loving, gracious, free heavenly family, if you choose to be disorderly, He will be patient, He will work long and hard. He won't give up easily; He'll even take you to Sinai before He will give you up. But if you still insist on going your own way, freedom means that much to God. There's nothing He can do about it anyway, if you won't listen. He will sadly let you go, and the consequences are unspeakable. Death is the result of sin. God had told the truth. But it wasn't execution; it wasn't God torturing His Son. And moreover, God wasn't asking us or the angels to prove the truthfulness of His word. God came and demonstrated His righteousness Himself. And the angels were convinced. . . . They needed evidence, just as we sinful members of the family do. . . They know the truth about death being the result of sin. But it's not the result of execution at the hands of our gracious God. They've understood. All that's left is for some of us to get the point, and to be overwhelmed by it, and be won back to admiration, love and trust.

When we have been led by this evidence to trust God, the most important wrong has been righted. So Ellen White says, the only way in which Christ could set and keep men right, was to reveal the truth about His Father's character. Therefore the whole purpose of His mission in coming to this earth was to set us right by revealing the truth about His Father. And to show that His Father was altogether a different kind of person from what Satan had made Him out to be. And that's what our message is all about. The good news is not about some legal technicality. The gospel is about the righteousness and the trustworthiness of God. There may be great controversy over that issue in days to come. But there is nothing for which the evidence adds up more strongly.

And it makes a tremendous difference to your picture of God, and even to the way you explain this to other people. It makes a difference in the way you conduct yourself in disagreement with other people, because just as God could not accomplish what He wanted by use of force to overwhelm people, by physical force or argument, it just won't work. If we're sold on this picture of God, we will be teachers, demonstrators, explainers. No wonder Jesus spent so much time healing the sick, because can you think of a better way to show that God is not a tyrant? He's not a torturer. He's not a destroyer. He's a healer. He's our heavenly Father; He wishes for us nothing but the best. Healing takes a little time. It needs patient, gracious treatment of people. And so Jesus portrayed His father, and then said when He died, "I have finished the work you gave Me to do. I have revealed the truth about you, My Heavenly Father." I really believe that's our work to do. And if God had not come, we wouldn't have these answers. We just wouldn't have it at all. And that's why I believe Hebrews 1 begins by saying that the one who came was the Supreme Creator God. That's absolutely essential. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Hebrews, chapter 2, recorded October, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:* <http://pkp.cc/3MMHEBREWS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMHEBREWS66> (Part 2)

The three questions were answered:

1. Does sin result in death? Indeed, it does!
2. But is it torture and execution at the hands of our gracious God? Indeed, it is not!
3. But what's so dangerous about misunderstanding this and serving God from fear? The service of fear produces the character of a rebel. It can even turn people who are dedicated to obedience into harsh rebels, and God's worst enemies!

### **Reconciling God to us?**

Obviously Jesus did not die to win his Father. How clear Paul is on this. 2 Corinthians 5:19 (RSV): "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." Nowhere ever does the Bible suggest that God had to be reconciled to us. Never once! But God paid the price to reconcile us to Himself! Nor did Jesus die to pay some mere legal penalty. He died to reveal the truth about God and the falsity of Satan's charges. Even the angels had to learn this. Look at Colossians 1:20 (RSV): "... and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace, [not war, but] making peace by the blood of his cross."

As Jesus said in John 12:32 (GNB): "When I am lifted up from the earth I will draw everyone to me." Not all men—everyone in the whole family of the universe. You see, viewed in the larger setting of the Great Controversy, the way in which Jesus suffered and died is the greatest revelation of the truth about God and His government that the universe will ever see or ever need. Correctly understood, the message of the cross is final defeat for the adversary. No wonder Satan has worked so hard to obscure and misrepresent and even pervert the meaning of the cross.

### **God's good news**

But to some of us the cross is great good news. Yes it is true that sinners will die but we have no need to be afraid of God and He died to prove it. This message has great power to win to repentance and to trust. Paul was so proud of this good news. Look at his understanding of it in the last verses. 1 Corinthians 1:17, 18 (RSV):

For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, [What is the Gospel—the good news—about?] and not with eloquent wisdom lest the cross of Christ, [that's the Gospel] be emptied of its power. [This good news has great power] For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Now compare with that Romans 1:16 (RSV) that very famous righteousness by faith verse: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: [this good news] it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith ... [Wherein lies the power?] for in it [something is revealed] the



righteousness of God is revealed.” The good news is that God is not the unrighteous kind of person his enemies have made him out to be.

Confidence in God has been confirmed by the way Jesus suffered and died. Among God’s friends whether angels or men this meaning of the cross will have power to hold God’s great family together in loyalty and in peace forever. {Graham Maxwell. *The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence*, 7-8, Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1982}

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### Further Study with Ellen White

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

It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart. But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God’s law. . . . His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth, without which, says Jesus, “he cannot see the kingdom of God.” {GC 467.2}

The Comforter is called “the Spirit of truth.” His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

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



A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897 par. 11}

Since God has poured out all heaven in that one rich gift, he will withhold no needed aid from man. All the agencies of heaven are at the command of the believing soul, that he may be successful in the warfare against the powers of darkness. . . .The soul imbued with the love of Christ is one with him; he communes with Christ, Christ is formed within, the hope of glory, and the Christian goes forth to represent the Father and the Son to the world. {ST, June 27, 1892 par. 6}

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}

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

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this

world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

It was the marvel of all the universe that Christ should humble Himself to save fallen man. That He who had passed from star to star, from world to world, superintending all, by His providence supplying the needs of every order of being in His vast creation—that He should consent to leave His glory and take upon Himself human nature, was a mystery which the sinless intelligences of other worlds desired to understand. When Christ came to our world in the form of humanity, all were intensely interested in following Him as He traversed, step by step, the bloodstained path from the manger to Calvary. Heaven marked the insult and mockery that He received, and knew that it was at Satan’s instigation. They marked the work of counteragencies going forward; Satan constantly pressing darkness, sorrow, and suffering upon the race, and Christ counteracting it. They watched the battle between light and darkness as it waxed stronger. And as Christ in His expiring agony upon the cross cried out, “It is finished” (John 19:30), a shout of triumph rang through every world and through heaven itself. The great contest that had been so long in progress in this world was now decided, and Christ was conqueror. His death had answered the question whether the Father and the Son had sufficient love for man to exercise self-denial and a spirit of sacrifice. Satan had revealed his true character as a liar and a murderer. It was seen that the very same spirit with which he had ruled the children of men who were under his power, he would have manifested if permitted to control the intelligences of heaven. With one voice the loyal universe united in extolling the divine administration. {PP 69.3}

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}