

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### First Quarter 2015: *Proverbs*

### Lesson 10 “Behind the Mask”

#### Read for this week’s study

Proverbs 25:2, 3; 26:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 1:20, 21; Proverbs 26:13–16; 27:5, 6.

#### Memory Text

“Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, and do not stand in the place of the great”  
(Proverbs 25:6, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. The Mystery of God
- III. The Fool as Wise
- IV. The Sluggard
- V. The Friend as Enemy
- VI. The Enemy as Friend
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Proverbs, chapters 25 through 27. Note all the proverbs that address issues related to authenticity and deception. What are some different ways that people seek to deceive or hide behind a mask? Why do human beings find that so easy to do? If we believe that God is committed to truth, why do people find it so hard to understand Him? (Sabbath afternoon’s lesson)
2. Read Genesis 3:1-6. What does this text teach us about authenticity, deception and God? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Proverbs 25:2-3. What does this passage tell us about God? What does it mean that “God conceals”? How do we square that with God’s love for truth and authenticity? What does Deuteronomy 17:14-20 tell us about government? Are there lessons here for the way that God rules the universe? (Sunday’s lesson)
4. Read Proverbs 26:11-12. One’s own thoughts always seem smarter than those of others. How can we avoid being “wise in our own eyes”? When is doing what is right in your own eyes right or wrong? Is it possible to have strong convictions and yet be open to new ideas at the same time? (Monday’s lesson)

5. Read Proverbs 26:13-16. What does this passage warn against? Is it something we all struggle with or is it a fault of certain kinds of people? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. Read Proverbs 27:5-6, 17. When can rebuke be a sign of love? When can kind words be an action of enmity? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. Read Proverbs 26:17-23. Which of these proverbs jumps out at you the most? Why is there often a disconnect between what we say and what we do? Since competitive sports usually involve some element of deceiving one's opponent, do they have a negative impact on one's character? (Thursday's lesson)
8. In today's "post-modern" world more and more people believe that all truth is relative. Is there some truth in that conviction? Are there some spiritual truths that are relative, cultural and changing? How do we distinguish them from truths that are eternal and universal? (Friday's lesson)
9. It is often said that the more we learn, the more we realize how little we know. What implication does this have for spiritual life?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Servant-believers tend to linger indefinitely at Mount Sinai, finding direction and security in the great code of regulations and symbols of forgiveness and salvation offered there.

Some servants seem to prefer the "dark speech." It leaves them with a greater sense of mystery and awe. And it seems to give some religious leaders special influence and power. They are venerated by less knowledgeable servants as "stewards of the mysteries" of God. (See 1 Corinthians 4:1)

But God's "mysteries" are not to be enshrouded in secrecy, like the carefully concealed knowledge of the popular "mystery religions" of Paul's day. God's secrets are to be fully revealed and made known. (See Colossians 2:25, 26) In fact, the New Testament describes God's most important secret as "Christ himself." (See Colossians 2:2, 3) And Jesus did not come to hide the truth. On the contrary, he came to make it plain and clear.

Some even look back wistfully at the thunder and lightning of Sinai. "How good it would be," I've heard some say, "if God would raise his voice to our wicked world today!"

Friends like to remember that the cave where God spoke to Elijah in the "still, small voice" was also there at Mount Sinai. (See 1 Kings 19:8-13) {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 173. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter13.html>

The way God has worked through His church, through His people, is the way He has demonstrated the truth about Himself and won the war. And that God has worked through the church is explained in a dramatic way in the next text on the sheet, 1 Corinthians 4:9: “we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men.” (RSV)

Do you know the Greek word for spectacle is *theatron*, from which we get “theater”? Some saints might be reluctant to attend the theater. We need to realize *we live in a theater* all the time—God’s stage. And on this stage He’s demonstrated the truth about Himself by the way He has dealt with His church. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 1, “The Conflict In God’s Family” recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>

It’s not that God has kept it a secret. It’s true; He hasn’t been able to reveal it all. But one of the major differences between a mystery religion and Christianity was this: When you were initiated into one of the mysteries, you were sworn never to tell anybody. Whereas the Christian “mystery” was to be told to everybody. So he loved calling Christianity a mystery and then telling everybody everything about it. So we have a “revealed” mystery. And his hearers would probably understand that and would be rather struck with the contrast. We have the most important information in the universe, and you might think we would want to keep it secret. No, we want to tell everybody. Go and tell this mystery to the whole world.

Lou: But was the actual Greek word that was used, the same word?

Graham: Yes. *Musterion*. “Mystery” comes from it.

Lou: Paul is referring to it as something that we wouldn’t have figured out on our own, but God gave it to us and we want to tell it to everyone.

Graham: The thing that would strike them the most is that it is not a secret {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 17 with Lou Venden, “Satan’s Final Effort To Deceive” recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/17MMCAG>

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

Connected with Christ, human nature becomes true and pure. Christ supplies the efficiency, and man becomes a power for good. . . . Truthfulness and integrity are attributes of God, and he who possesses these qualities possesses a power that is invincible. {HP 179.6}

The word of God, like the character of its divine Author, presents mysteries that can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. The entrance of sin into the world, the incarnation of

Christ, regeneration, the resurrection, and many other subjects presented in the Bible, are mysteries too deep for the human mind to explain, or even fully to comprehend. But we have no reason to doubt God's word because we cannot understand the mysteries of His providence. In the natural world we are constantly surrounded with mysteries that we cannot fathom. The very humblest forms of life present a problem that the wisest of philosophers is powerless to explain. Everywhere are wonders beyond our ken. Should we then be surprised to find that in the spiritual world also there are mysteries that we cannot fathom? The difficulty lies solely in the weakness and narrowness of the human mind. God has given us in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine character, and we are not to doubt His word because we cannot understand all the mysteries of His providence. {SC 106.2}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures. {COL 60.1}

The entrance of sin into the world, the incarnation of Christ, regeneration, the resurrection, and many other subjects presented in the Bible, are mysteries too deep for the human mind to explain or even to fully comprehend. But God has given us in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine character, and we are not to doubt His word because we cannot understand all the mysteries of His providence. {5T 699.3}

If it were possible for created beings to attain to a full understanding of God and His works, then, having reached this point, there would be for them no further discovery of truth, no growth in knowledge, no further development of mind or heart. God would no longer be supreme; and men, having reached the limit of knowledge and attainment, would cease to advance. Let us thank God that it is not so. God is infinite; in Him are "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." And to all eternity men may be ever searching, ever learning, and yet they can never exhaust the treasures of His wisdom, His goodness, and His power. {5T 703.1}

God is able and willing to bestow upon His servants all the strength they need and to give them the wisdom that their varied necessities demand. He will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him. {AA 242.1}

There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. {RH, December 20, 1892 par. 1}

By imparting to others the love and tenderness which God has so abundantly bestowed on us, we are to let our light shine. We should put every gift of God to the best possible use, making it a producer of good. To God we can give nothing which is not already His, but we can help the suffering ones around us. We can supply them with the necessities of this life, and at the same time speak to them of the wonderful love of God. {RC 198.5}

While slander may blacken the reputation, it cannot stain the character. That is in God's keeping. So long as we do not consent to sin, there is no power, whether human or satanic, that can bring a stain upon the soul. A man whose heart is stayed upon God is just the same in the hour of his most afflicting trials and most discouraging surroundings as when he was in prosperity, when the light and favor of God seemed to be upon him. His words, his motives, his actions, may be misrepresented and falsified, but he does not mind it, because he has greater interests at stake. Like Moses, he endures as "seeing Him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27); looking "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Corinthians 4:18). {MB 32.2}