

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**Third Quarter 2015: *Missionaries***  
**Lesson 1 “The Missionary Nature of God”**

**Read for this week’s study**

Genesis 1:26–2, 2:15–17; 1 John 2:16; John 3:14, 15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 5:13, 14.

**Memory Text**

“See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples”  
(Isaiah 55:4, NIV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. God Created Man and Woman
- III. Free Will
- IV. The Fall
- V. God’s Initiative to Save Us
- VI. Metaphors of Mission
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Moderator: Jon Paulien**

1. When you think of mission and missionaries, one text in the Bible stands out for most people, Matthew 28:19-20. This passage is often called The Great Commission. In Google or another online search engine enter “Matthew 28:19-20 commentaries” and explore some of your results. Come to class prepared to contribute your favorite discoveries. (Introduction to whole Quarter)
2. This quarter’s lessons begin with a beautiful theme, how God the Father Himself is a missionary at heart. The memory text for this is Isaiah 55:4, where it says “I have made **him** a witness to the peoples.” Why do you think this particular text was chosen in relation to the theme? Read Isaiah 55:4 in its context. Who is speaking in this chapter? Is the “him” in this verse actually referring to God or is it referring to someone else? If the latter, what text in the Bible would you use instead to support the title of this lesson regarding the “missionary nature” of God the Father? (Sabbath Afternoon’s lesson)
3. The core text for understanding the human condition and the purpose of our creation is Genesis 1:26-28. In what ways is the creation of humans different from

the rest of creation? What implications do these differences have for mission today?  
(Sunday's lesson)

4. What does Genesis 2:15-17 tell us about God? What does it tell us about humanity and free will? What are the implications of free will for human suffering? What are the implications of free will for the way we do church? (Monday's lesson)
5. Read Genesis 3:1-7. What does this passage tell us about God? What implications does it have for the cosmic conflict? Read 1 John 2:16. How were the elements warned about in this text seen in the Fall? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. What does Genesis 3:9-19 tell us about God? Read John 3:14-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:21. What do each of these texts teach us about the death of Jesus? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. Read Matthew 5:13-14. What metaphors for mission do you see in this passage? (Thursday's lesson)

## A Fresh Translation of Key Passages

### Matthew 28:18-20

And after arriving Jesus spoke to them,  
    "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.  
    Therefore go (having gone)  
    make disciples of all nations  
        baptizing them in the name of  
            the Father and of  
            the Son and of  
            the Holy Spirit  
    teaching them to keep (observe) all that I have commanded you  
And behold, I am with you every day ("all the days")  
    Even until the close of the age."

### Genesis 1:26-28

And God said,  
    "Let us make man (*adam*—humanity) in our image,  
    according to our likeness,  
    and let them rule  
        over the fish of the sea and  
        over the birds of the sky and  
        over the livestock and  
        over all the earth and  
        over all the creatures that move along the ground."  
And God created the man (*ha-adam*) in his image  
    in the image of God He created him

male and female He created them.  
And God blessed them and said to them,  
“Be fruitful and  
be many and  
fill the earth and  
subdue it.  
Rule  
over the fish of the sea and  
over the birds of the sky and  
over all the living things that move along the ground.”

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

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

But mankind has paid a heavy price for neglecting the Sabbath, or substituting another day. For without the Sabbath to provide the answers to the three great questions of life, other solutions have been substituted. Where have we come from? Without the seventh day Sabbath to remind us that in the beginning Christ created us, room has been left for the substitution of the theory of the evolutionary origin of the human race. Or as others say more scientifically, we don't know where we've come from. Why are we here? How do we attain to the greatest good in life? Without the seventh day Sabbath to remind us that righteousness and salvation come by faith in Jesus Christ, room has been left for the substitution of the fundamental error of righteousness by works. Or as others have said more carelessly, we don't know why we're here. So let's eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die! And where do we go after we die? Without the seventh day Sabbath to point forward to the second coming, to the rewards of faith and the results of sin, room has been left for the substitution of the belief in the natural immortality of the soul. Or as others prefer to say, we don't know where we go after we die. So again, let's eat, drink and be merry.

Incidentally, those three substitute answers; aren't they almost universally held? And not just in Christianity. Belief in the natural immortality of the soul is shared by almost everybody. The idea that salvation comes by works; Ellen White states that is the fundamental error of every false religious system, salvation by works. There are all kinds of substitute explanations as to where we came from that put God in a bad light, or that make of no effect the plan of salvation. But all three of these substitutions wipe out all the significance of the plan of salvation. This is why the seventh day Sabbath is so vital a part of God's last message to the world. The main difference between the many religions in the world and true Christianity lies in the answers to

these three great quests. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Faith, Righteousness and Salvation, #13 "Faith and the seventh-day Sabbath", recorded April, 1975, Lynwood, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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

I wonder if tonight we could think back in imagination to the very dramatic events of that first week of this earth's history. The war had begun already up in Heaven. Satan had already leveled his charges and his accusations. One third of the angels had already agreed with him that God is not worthy of our love and our trust. Right in the middle of that devastating crisis, God invites His family to watch Him as He creates yet another world, this time ours. How easily He could have created our world with a snap of His fingers, in just an instant of time. But in the dramatic and significant setting of the great controversy He chose, this time, to do it in six 24-hour days. On the first day, all He said was, "Let there be light." That's all. And then day 2, 3, 4, 5, as God in unhurried majesty and drama unfolded His plans for our earth. By the sixth day, what a beautiful place this was. Where now were Satan's charges that God was selfish? I mean, look at the freedom. He created us in His own image with power to think and to do. And we know from human history that He created us free to either love and trust Him or hate Him and spit in His face, because it has been done. He created us able to do it. God even allowed Satan to approach our first parents at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And He didn't hide that tree in some dark corner of the garden; He put it right in the middle near the Tree of Life, so that Adam and Even would see it every time they came to that other tree. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10, "The Reminder of the Evidence" recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG>

Is faith a gift of God? Is that why some have faith and some don't? He's given it to some and not to others? If God gives faith, why do some have it and some don't? And does He give more to some than to others? Does He practice favoritism here? Can faith actually be given? You say to God, "I don't trust you. I think you're an absolutely untrustworthy liar as the devil has said, but I wish I trusted you and thought you told the truth. I'm praying that when I wake up in the morning I will trust you and not think you're a liar anymore."

You hop into bed, wake up in the morning, you love, trust and admire God, you now know He tells the truth. Would you trust that? Can God give us faith as an outright gift? And yet, if God had not given us the capacity to reason and to weigh evidence and to discern between the true and the false, if God had not given us the capacity to make decisions and commitments, if God

had not given us the revelation of the truth about Himself at such cost, if God did not preserve us from the enemy who would destroy us and confuse us and take away our chance to weigh the evidence, in fact, if God has not done all that He has done would there be any chance that we could see Him as He is and trust Him? In fact, who even instructs us and works with us and persuades us, and tries to lead us to truth and conviction? Aren't all these things the work of God and the work of the Holy Spirit? Is there anything, though, that God doesn't do in the matter of faith? Does He also cast our vote? Does God not only bring the evidence but also force our vote? If God has forced our vote then He's won the great controversy by stuffing the ballot box, hasn't He? He really hasn't won our vote. As Ellen White says repeatedly, our vote is offered in the highest sense of freedom. The vote is ours.

So God gives us every opportunity to have faith, but the decision to trust it is left with us. And many religions don't like that. They don't want anything left with us. But if it isn't left with us, how are we held accountable in the judgment? Are we not judged as to whether or not we've chosen to place our faith in the true God?

Isn't that the only thing we're held responsible for? The decision is ours, or else our trust in God would mean nothing to Him, would it? If He had manipulated us so that we trusted Him, I mean, if our wives said they loved us because we had manipulated them, we'd be talking back to ourselves. Does God just want to hear Himself talking back, "I love you God"? Or does He want to hear us say in the highest sense of freedom, "We do love and trust you, that's our choice." Hasn't He paid a heavy price to preserve our freedom to cast our own vote in the great controversy? And to love Him because we've decided He's lovable and trustworthy. And I think it's so cruel of many religions to suggest that even faith is not our decision. God does all of that. Yes, He brings everything to us. Without Him there would be no chance to exercise faith. But the decision, the vote is ours, and for that we're held responsible.

In fact, Ellen White says if the Holy Spirit should be poured out on you with a hundred fold greater intensity, it would not make of you a Christian. (MB 142) The Spirit only leads to truth, leads us to conviction, but at the same time preserves our freedom to vote no. So when it says faith is a gift of God, I think we have to reserve that one act that is assigned to us—the decision whether we're going to respond to the evidence with trust or with rebellion and distrust. Why all the costly revelation these thousands of years and all the records of Scripture that we might have the evidence, if God is the one who places faith in our hearts anyway whether we have evidence or not? If God just says, "Now you don't trust me, now you do" why do you need any evidence? The fact that God has been such a teacher and has brought us so much evidence is clear support that He'll bring us every opportunity; He'll preserve our lives to give us those moments of freedom when we cast our vote. But casting that vote is our privilege, our responsibility; He's created us capable of voting, and holds us responsible for the vote that we cast. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 12, recorded January,

1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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

As the apostle Paul explains, law was added because of wrongdoing and transgression. (See Galatians 3:19) Actually, what God wants most for his children—peace, love, happiness and trusting friendship—cannot be produced by legislation, much less by force or fear. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord. (Zechariah 3:4) Only by the way the Spirit works—the Spirit of love and truth—can people be persuaded of their own free will to give God what he wants.

You can force people to be your servants. But you cannot compel them to be your friends. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 22. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter2.html>

If you had been in God’s place on that day in Eden when Adam and Eve first sinned, what would you have done with them?

Would you have forgiven them and offered at least one more chance to stay in the garden? Human parents do this every day for their disobedient children. Since God is love, why was Adam banished on his first offense? (See Genesis 3.)

The wrong answer to this question can seriously affect one’s attitude toward God and one’s practice of religion.

Many believe that God has long been angry with the human race, most reluctant to forgive and bless His erring creatures. For thousands of years men have offered sacrifice—sometimes their children—to win the favor of an offended god. Even in the Christian world some teach that, were it not for constant intercession, God could not find it in His heart to love and save us sinners.

But need we do anything to make God love us?

Nothing is more emphatic in Scripture than that God has always loved—even His most wayward child. When God said, “In the day that you eat of it, you shall die,” He was uttering no arbitrary threat. In love for His creatures, He was only warning of the consequence of rebellion.

Sin so changes the sinner that it actually results in death. Separated from the Source of life, he will surely die. Out of harmony with his Creator he can no longer endure the glory of His

presence. {Maxwell, A. Graham. *You Can Trust the Bible; why, after many translations, it is still the word of God*, 68-69. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1967}

And forgiveness doesn't take care of that change. That's why salvation is more than forgiveness, it means healing the damage done. Sin really changes us. The legalist thinks he can go and get it just covered or erased or forgiven or pardoned or forgotten. That's legalism. But to recognize that sin damages us, we're never the same. Adam and Eve were never the same. They were hurt by this thing. They could not pass on a perfect nature to their children. They were weakened by this thing. That's why it's suicide to sin. I mean the reasons for sin are not just it upsets our righteous Heavenly Father. It also is utterly destructive too and He does not wish us to destroy ourselves. There's every reason for not sinning. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, *We've Camped Around This Mountain Long Enough, #1*, recorded July, 1989, South Dakota Conference Ministers Meeting} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAMPED>*

In the narrow view the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was given before sin as a test of obedience. But in the larger great controversy view the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was put there *after* sin and God and the angels came to Adam and Eve and said, "You know why that tree is there? Because we've had a conflict in the family and Satan has deceived one third of the angels and he could easily deceive you. But we will only let him come to the tree. Don't go near the tree." So in the narrow view it's a test of obedience and it's arbitrary. In the great controversy view it's a gift to us. It was put there to protect us like every one of God's laws, and not an arbitrary one among them. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Understanding the Mission of the Church, #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>*

The moment Adam and Eve sinned God veiled His life-giving glory or they would have died in the Garden of Eden. They would have been consumed by the glory of Him who is love. And Ellen White describes the fact that the moment God veiled His life-giving glory Adam and Eve were chilled. And He brought them clothes to protect them from the extremes of heat and cold. First I learned that that happened after the Flood. She says no, that happened when God veiled His life-giving glory and the Earth became a dark place. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Understanding the Mission of the Church, #6*, 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/6MMUTMOTC>*

So first this evening, let us consider again what has gone wrong, because I believe the way we understand what went wrong helps us to understand the methods God has used to set things right. And particularly then it helps us to understand why Jesus had to die. Our God has been accused, specifically, of being arbitrary, and exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. God sent His Son to reveal the truth about these matters. Why was it not enough for Jesus to come and live among us as He did and tell us the truth about His Father and then demonstrate by His gracious treatment of the worst of sinners that God, indeed, is not the kind of Person His enemies have made Him out to be?

Of course, the way He lived and the way He treated people is vital evidence. And we will spend much time on it later, particularly on the evening entitled “How God Treats His Erring Children.”

But remember that the most serious charge leveled against our God is that God has lied to us. He lied when He said that sin results in death. Worse than that, Satan has turned God’s gracious warning to our first parents in the Garden of Eden into a terrifying threat. He pictures God as saying to Adam and Eve, “Either you obey me, or I’ll kill you!” And think of the baleful effect that perversion of the truth about our God has had on the human race. Think how it has poisoned people’s attitude toward God and their practice of religion. Think of picturing our gracious God as saying, “You either love and obey me, or I’ll torture and execute you in my righteous wrath.” How could this satanic view of God win such wide acceptance as it has? And it is still very widely believed.

For thousands of years, men have sacrificed even their own children to win the favor of their offended gods. Even in the Christian world it is suggested, even believed, that if it were not for Christ’s appeasement sometimes called propitiation, of His Father’s wrath, we would long before now have been destroyed. And were it not for Christ’s constant pleading with the Father, God could not find it in His own heart to forgive and heal His children.

Who could have thought up such perversion? But now, as you know the sixty-six books, does anything need to be done to persuade God to love His children? The testimony of all sixty-six books is that God has always loved even His most wayward child. That is what is summed up in John 3:16, “God so loved the world. . . .” Not just His good children, but all His children, both good and bad.

And those serious words to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden were no threat. Those words were a gracious warning—because sin actually results in death. Sin so changes the sinner that a natural consequence of this condition is death. Cut off by his own rebellious choice from the source of life, the sinner will die. Now out of harmony with God by his own rebellious rejection, the sinner is so changed that even the life-giving glory of our God becomes a consuming fire. How can this best be clarified? Not by claims, but by evidence and demonstration.



One choice that God had was to allow Adam and Eve to die. And He could have said to the universe, “Who is telling the truth? I said sinners would die! It is the devil who has lied to you.”

Or going back even further, God could have left Satan and his followers to reap the natural results of their sin and they would have perished. And surely then there would have been no question about the truthfulness of God’s warning. Why didn’t God take those—it would seem—easy choices? He could have saved all the painful history since that time. Of course, had the universe watched Satan and his followers die, they had never seen death before, so there was the hazard that they would assume that God had executed His children who did not please Him. Then there would be the danger that the angels would serve God from fear, and the obedience that springs from fear produces the character of a rebel. And rebelliousness is the essence of sin.

And so instead of God taking that easy way, not wanting the obedience and love that springs from fear, totally unacceptable to so gracious a God as we know Him to be, and having such dire consequences; instead of taking those choices, God sent His Son in human form.

And He died the death that is the natural result of sin. And the universe watched to see how God was involved in the death of the wicked. {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>*

**Recommended further study:** The complete article (interview) written for The Exchange in 1999 [Why Did Jesus Have to Die \(PDF\)](#)

#### **Recommended Listening:**

Conversations About God session #8 “The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence” is available at: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>

Faith, Righteousness and Salvation session #2 “Why Did Jesus Have to Die?” is available at: <http://pkp.cc/3MMFRS> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMFRS> (Part 2)

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

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}

So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God. {PP 51.1}

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. {Ed 17.2}

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. {DA 466.4}

Pure religion has to do with the will. The will is the governing power in the nature of man, bringing all the other faculties under its sway. The will is not the taste or the inclination, but it is the deciding power which works in the children of men unto obedience to God or unto disobedience. {5T 513.1}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

The victory is not won without much earnest prayer, without the humbling of self at every step. Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. The stronghold of Satan would not be broken. The will must be placed on the side of God's will. You are not able, of yourself, to bring your purposes and desires and inclinations into submission to the will of God; but if you are "willing to be made willing," God will accomplish the work for you, even "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the

knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5. Then you will “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12, 13. {MB 142.1}

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. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 12}

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. . . . But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God’s wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which “angels desire to look,” and it will be their study throughout endless ages. {DA 19.2}

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, humbling Himself, veiling His glory, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed. . . . In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. {TMK 338.4}

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}