

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Third Quarter 2015: *Missionaries*

### Lesson 12 “Paul: Mission and Message”

#### Read for this week’s study

1 Corinthians 1:22–24; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7; 1 Corinthians 15:12–22; Acts 15:38–41.

#### Memory Text

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13, 14, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. Greeks and Jews
- III. Soldiers and Athletes
- IV. Paul and the Law
- V. The Cross and the Resurrection
- VI. Getting Along
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1:22-24. How do these verses help us to understand the different ways that people relate to truth? Most Christians come to conclusions about truth on the basis of the Bible, reason, experience, and tradition. How have you come to your own understandings of truth? (Sunday’s lesson)
2. It appears that at one point in his life, at least, Paul was an avid watcher or participant in the sports of the ancient world. What lessons for the Christian life did Paul draw from athletic events in the following passages? 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Galatians 5:7; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:5. (Monday’s lesson)
3. Paul also seems to be quite familiar with ancient military life. What comparisons does he make between the soldier’s life and Christian experience in the following texts? 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3-4. In what ways is faith a fight and in what ways is it a race? Which metaphor best describes your own experience? Be prepared to explain. (Monday’s lesson)

4. What does Paul mean when he says he does not nullify the law through his perspective on faith? (Romans 3:31) Which law is he talking about in this text? How do the following verses underline the point that the ten commandments were not abolished at the cross? Romans 13:8-10; 2:21-24; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Ephesians 4:25, 28; 5:3; 6:2. What role do the ten commandments play in Christian life? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-22. How do these verses show that the death and resurrection of Jesus are crucial to the gospel? What implications does Jesus' resurrection have for everyday life? What does the Adventist understanding of the human condition in death tell us about God? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. Read Acts 15:38-41. What exactly do you think took place here and what does it tell us about the humanity of even the greatest of missionaries? Read 2 Timothy 4:11. What does this text reveal about Paul's growth in forgiveness? How can we learn to forgive those whose mistakes have hurt us? (Thursday's lesson)
7. Read Acts 17:16-31. What is the role of cities in evangelism? What approach does Paul take with educated and more "secular" people? (Friday's lesson)
8. How did you personally come to faith and what role did such factors as miracles on the one hand or reason and logic on the other play in your conversion? What role have they had in maintaining your faith? (Friday's lesson)
9. Think of the neighborhood in which you live. What kind of beliefs do your neighbors have? What would be the best way to reach out to them with a message about God? What kinds of things are likely to "offend" and what kind of approaches are likely to be helpful? (Friday's lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Even after Paul became a friend of God, he still was accustomed to using more than a little "dark speech" in his theological explanations— though not as dark, in my opinion, as it may appear in some translations.

Following his remarkable display of eloquence and erudition at the nearby city of Athens (*see* Acts 17:22-31), Paul informed the believers in Corinth that from then on he was going to speak plainly and simply when he talked about God (*see* 1 Corinthians 2:1-5). Even so, the apostle Peter observed—very respectfully—that Paul's letters contained "some obscure passages, which the ignorant and unstable misinterpret" (2 Peter 3:16, NEB).

For this reason, when reading Paul's writings, I believe it is particularly important to read whole sections at a time, even whole letters or "books," in order to give Paul a fair chance to make plain his intent.

Paul's consistent emphasis is on the truth about God that is the basis for peace and freedom, love and trust, a trust like that of God's friend Abraham. Paul is now well aware that such precious things are not produced by might or power, as God told the prophet Zechariah. Nor can they be enforced by law. They can only come in free response to the gentle but long-lasting persuasiveness of truth. In this same letter to the Galatians, Paul explains that such things as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" all are "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22, NRSV).

While the Spirit of Truth has patiently continued his work of enlightenment and conviction, God has used many and various measures to control and protect his children as they are given opportunity to learn the truth. He has especially made use of law. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 88-89. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter7.html>

And he was chided—even by some Christians who hadn't worked it out too well yet, and they would say to Paul, "Aren't you doing away with the law by your emphasis on trust?"

"No," he said, Romans 3:31. "Faith does not abolish law. Faith establishes law, by putting it in its proper perspective."

Next question: "What is the proper perspective? What is the over-all view, the larger view of all this?"

The answer is in Galatians 3, the text that was the basis of the Minneapolis General Conference discussion. Look at that, Galatians 3:19.

"Why then the law?" he was asked.

"It was added." What law was added? Remember the debate at Minneapolis? Was it the Ten Commandments? Was it the ceremonial law? They had quite a disagreement. When we get to Galatians, I'll bring the documents (some of which are not published at the present time). Did you know that the President of the General Conference and a young physician—they wrote two books holding two opposite views on this matter? Elder Butler and Dr. Waggoner. I mean, how could a young physician talk to the General Conference President like that? It was very respectful! The introductions are very polite. But then they mince no words about their disagreement. So they went to Ellen White and said, "What law was added to be our guardian to bring us to Christ?"

"Why," she says, "it was the Ten Commandments and the ceremonial law; all of it." All law was added because of the emergency of sin.

But what is sin? Romans 14, "Sin is a lack of trust. A breach of trust."

What is sin? 1 John 3:4, "Sin is rebelliousness." Sin is a stubborn unwillingness to listen. Or in the book of James, sin is knowing to do what is right and not doing it. Doesn't that perfectly describe the children of Israel when God brought them out of the land of Egypt? Was there trust? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Leviticus, recorded October, 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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

<http://pkp.cc/5MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/6MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

This separation between the Old and the New Testaments is very regrettable. And personally I don't see any break whatsoever between the two. Christ came to say, "I haven't come to do away with the Old Testament; I've come to fulfill it, to explain it, to tell you what it's all about." And His explanations, almost all of them are quotations from the Old Testament. What it means to fulfill the law, that what God wants is love and faith and trust and trustworthiness, runs all through the Old Testament. We have never been under law in our relationship with God. We are under grace. The law has never been a way of being saved.

But that leads Paul to ask the question, "Why then the law at all?" If all God has ever wanted is that we be won back to trust Him, if the struggle for righteousness and salvation by works of law has always been fruitless for us sinners—why then the law? And in Galatians, you remember he says, "It was added because of transgressions, to be our custodian, our schoolmaster" the *King James* says, "our guardian to bring us to Christ." And once we've come to Christ if we stay with Him, we are no longer under this custodian. And as you remember, Jones and Waggoner said that our traditional view that it is the ceremonial law which terminates once we have come to Christ is wrong. That leads to the assumption that you can be righteous by works of obedience to the Ten Commandments but not to the ceremonial law. They said that the struggle for righteousness by works of obedience to any law is fruitless. And the law that was added to bring us to Christ includes every law that God ever gave. Everything was designed for our best good, to win us back to trust and faith and to restore the damage done.

And so you remember the struggle at the Minneapolis General Conference on this subject. It is spelled out in detail in *Selected Messages Book One*, and since we will do more when we get to Galatians, just a little of this now. Ellen White says:

I'm asked concerning this law in Galatians that was added because of transgressions to be our guardian to bring us to Christ. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of Ten Commandments.

Later she says after quoting the same verse, “In this scripture, [Galatians 3:24], the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law.”

Just the opposite of the view in those days, because “the law reveals sin to us, and causes us to feel our need of Christ and to flee unto Him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

He is not doing away with the law. We sinners need it, it was added to help us and we are still sinners and we still need it. And someday when we don’t need it, it will be because our lives are in perfect harmony with it; it isn’t that we have done away with it. And then she goes on to say that:

An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, [that is, the purpose of God’s laws, the Ten Commandments, the ceremonial law, the purpose of everything God has ever asked us to do], An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and accept this, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord’s message through Brethren Waggoner and Jones [and how the devil was delighted that we were unwilling to accept this explanation]. By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them [think of that, the Latter Rain held off because we wouldn’t accept this truth]. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world [we can’t even finish the work until we are straight on this point]. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted. . . .

That would suggest, then, that a correct understanding of God’s use of law lies at the foundation of our understanding the light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory. Because a misunderstanding of God’s use of law can lead one to support Satan’s charges that God is arbitrary, unforgiving and severe. No wonder Ellen White said so much about understanding the place of the law in the good news. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 10, recorded December, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/19MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/20MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

If on the way home, and forbid the thought, any one of us should have a mishap, if they have navigational difficulties on my plane and we go down in the Sea of Japan, for example. I mean, these things happen. We believe that when a person dies the very next instant of consciousness he’s face to face with the Lord either at the first coming, the second coming, or at the third coming. Now it will be terrible to awaken from this long sleep, however long it is, a long and

dreamless sleep, totally unaware of the passage of time, won't have dreamed at all during that sleep so that night will be as if you'd put your head on the pillow and the alarm went off the next instant. That's what the sleep of death is like and we need to tell people that.

Sometimes we're so concerned to deny the doctrine of the immortality of the soul that we almost emphasize the length of time these poor folk are going to spend in the grave. They're unaware of it entirely, they go to sleep and wake up the next instant of consciousness. Maybe a thousand years, but they're unaware of it. So in a sense, you know, when you die you're with the Lord the next instant, it's true as far as you know. And it could be at the second coming. It could be at the third coming. What an awful thing to arise and look around and realize you've arisen in the wrong resurrection. Of course, you'd look around at first and there's the leader of the Dorcas Society and there's the treasurer but then there's Idi Amin and Hitler and you begin to wonder, something's gone wrong. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Understanding the Mission of the Church*, #3, 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/3MMUTMOTC>

### Further Study with Ellen White

Today the truths of Scripture are to be brought before the great men of the world in order that they may choose between obedience to God's law and allegiance to the prince of evil. God sets everlasting truth before them—truth that will make them wise unto salvation, but He does not force them to accept it. If they turn from it, He leaves them to themselves, to be filled with the fruit of their own doings. {AA 241.2}

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}

The Prince of teachers, He sought access to the people by the pathway of their most familiar associations. He presented the truth in such a way that ever after it was to His hearers intertwined with their most hallowed recollections and sympathies. He taught in a way that made them feel the completeness of His identification with their interests and happiness. His instruction was so direct, His illustrations were so appropriate, His words so sympathetic and cheerful, that His hearers were charmed. The simplicity and earnestness with which He addressed the needy, hallowed every word.—*Ministry of Healing*, pp. 22-24. (1905) {Ev 55.1}

Christ came to preach the gospel to the poor. He reached the people where they were. He brought plain, simple truth to their comprehension. How simple his language! Even the poorest, the unlearned and ignorant, could understand him. Not one needed go to a dictionary to obtain

the meaning of the high-sounding titles or words that fell from the lips of the greatest Teacher the world ever knew. {RH, July 19, 1887 par. 13}

Paul carried with him the atmosphere of heaven. All who associated with him felt the influence of his union with Christ. The fact that his own life exemplified the truth he proclaimed, gave convincing power to his preaching. Here lies the power of the truth. The unstudied, unconscious influence of a holy life is the most convincing sermon that can be given in favor of Christianity. Argument, even when unanswerable, may provoke only opposition; but a godly example has a power that it is impossible wholly to resist. {GW 59.1}

The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness, seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression. {6BC 1085.5}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {6BC 1085.6}

Moses wrote these judgments and statutes from the mouth of God while he was with him in the mount. If the people of God had obeyed the principles of the ten commandments, there would have been no need of the specific directions given to Moses, which he wrote in a book, relative to their duty to God and to one another. The definite directions which the Lord gave to Moses in regard to the duty of his people to one another, and to the stranger, are the principles of the ten commandments simplified, and given in a definite manner that they need not err. {3SG 299.3}

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

It is beyond the power of the human mind to estimate the evil which has been wrought by the heresy of eternal torment. The religion of the Bible, full of love and goodness, and abounding in compassion, is darkened by superstition and clothed with terror. When we consider in what false colors Satan has painted the character of God, can we wonder that our merciful Creator is feared, dreaded, and even hated? The appalling views of God which have spread over the world from the teachings of the pulpit have made thousands, yes, millions, of skeptics and infidels.  
{GC 536.2}