

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2015: *Jeremiah*
Lesson 2 “The Crisis (Within and Without)”

Read for this week’s study

Judges 2:1–15; 1 Kings 12:26–31; 2 Chronicles 33:9, 10; Jeremiah 2:1–28, 5:2, 3.

Memory Text

“Israel was holiness to the LORD. The firstfruits of His increase. All that devour him will offend; disaster will come upon them,’ says the LORD” (Jeremiah 2:3, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Quick History
- III. The Two Kingdoms
- IV. Two Evils
- V. The Babylonian Threat
- VI. Swearing Falsely
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

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GOD’S WORDS BLEED PAIN (Jeremiah 2-3)

A. Introduction

- 1. A battle over the texts from ancient Ebla. Relationships are so important in our lives. Why do they cause so much pain?
- 2. Many of biblical metaphors build on relationships. Among the most frequently used are the family metaphors. Which seem to be most prominent?
- 3. What do the following three prophetic books have in common: Hosea, Jeremiah & Revelation?

B. Forgetting the first love (Jeremiah 2:1-3)

- 1. Jeremiah began his ministry in the city of Jerusalem. Why?
- 2. The prophet refers to the nation as God’s bride. What does this metaphor imply?
- 3. Jeremiah’s description of Israel’s journey in the wilderness contrasts with the one from the book of Numbers. How faithful to God were His people in the wilderness?

C. Worthless idols (Jeremiah 2:10-13)

1. In this passage God is described as “Glory.” Why are the idols of the nations described as worthless?
2. The “heavens” are summoned as a witness. Can they really be a reliable witness?
3. The water from springs and the water from cisterns—how are the two tastes different?

D. Social oppression (Jeremiah 2:34-37)

1. The practice of idolatry inevitably leads to oppression and bloodshed. Why?
2. There were several dispensers of justice in ancient Israel. Who was the supreme judge?
3. Egypt and Assyria are often mentioned in the Bible. What comes to mind when we hear their names?

E. A call to return (Jeremiah 3:14-18)

1. The nation of Judah had to endure divine discipline. What do the words “one from a town and two from a clan” imply?
2. Jeremiah says that the day is coming when the Ark of the Covenant will no longer be important. Why? (Revelation 21)
3. This passage ends with precious promises made by God to His people. How are these promises ultimately fulfilled? (Luke 1:31-33)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now I believe the distinctive mission of the Adventist Church is to prepare ourselves and all who are willing to listen, not just to be saved—all of God’s loyal children have wanted people to be saved and have tried to help them from the very beginning. The distinctiveness of our Adventist emphasis is to prepare ourselves and as many who are willing to listen to survive this awful time of trouble, to hear Satan’s charges, the same old ones, but he’s sharpened them up after the years. No one will ever have heard more deceptive misrepresentation of the truth than the last generation, but this group will survive. So, we are trying to help people grow up. Does your church program help your members become more mature, able to stand on their own feet? Do they stand on their own feet so firmly that if you should apostatize they would not?

We want our folk to love and trust us, but not beyond their loyalty to the truth. So we have to, somehow, in our churches make the truth so clear that the individuals—on their own—can say, “I would believe this, Pastor, even if you collapsed, but I hope you won’t.” So that’s a very

special mission that we have and a very exciting program in the church to help our members grow up. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Understanding the Mission of the Church, #9, 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/9MMUTMOTC>

It seems to me that what's coming to light here is that the essence of the spirit of the reformation is this age-old thing, breaking away from false tyranny, ecclesiastical, theological tyranny of fellow human beings who don't know any more than we do, who have to have the same relationship with God that we do, and come back to the source of truth; the Scriptures, which will lead us back to God, the source of everything. Every generation has to do this. In fact, every child who grows up in a good Adventist home has to do this, because you can't just accept the package from your parents, and place your parents where God should be. How wonderful to grow up with parents who will teach us the right way and discipline us correctly. But if I then do what's right, just because that's the way our family does it and the way my parents told me to do it, and I was conditioned a lot in various, even physical ways to form such habits, I've still placed people where God should be. And God wishes his children, in the highest sense of freedom, to decide whether or not he wants to be a member of the loyal family in the universe. So this message comes to every generation. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Galatians, #3, recorded February, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/3MMGALATIANS66>

How long till they cry out because of their king? Do you remember that Solomon had to tax them to death to build all those magnificent palaces for all those wives and temples for their gods, and his own magnificent edifices, and his great irrigation systems? Think of all the things that Solomon built! They cost money. That's why Solomon was able to write, you remember, without money you can have none of these things. Money answers everything, Solomon wrote. We'll come to that later. Now where do you get the money from? You tax the people. And so when Solomon died, and Rehoboam was about to be crowned king, you remember, the people said, "How is it going to be with our taxes? Are you going to lower them?" And he said, "No, I'm going to double them!" And ten of the tribes were so angry over that they seceded, and from then on, it was Israel to the north and Judah to the south. And Jeroboam became king of the northern tribes. So taxation under Solomon did a great deal of damage, and the people complained of the taxation. And God said, "Look; don't complain to me. I said this is what would happen. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Ruth & 1 Samuel, recorded November, 1983, 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/13MMPOGIA66> (Pt 1 Ruth & 1 Samuel)

<http://pkp.cc/14MMPOGIA66> (Pt 2 Ruth & 1 Samuel)

He has always waited patiently for His children to make up their own minds. Think of how many centuries he waited for Israel to respond to the information brought by the prophetic messengers that he sent one after the other. And not until the children of Israel had resisted the truth so long that they were beyond even the Creator's power to restore, did he finally and reluctantly give them up. But after the Israelites had been taken off to Babylonian captivity, God inspired the writer of 2 Chronicles to explain why he could no longer protect them, why he had to let them go. Look at 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16:

The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people [grossly as many of them were misbehaving, as you know from the biblical record]; but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, till the wrath of the Lord [and we know that means his sadly giving people up, from Romans and Hosea and elsewhere], till the wrath of the Lord rose against the people, till there was no remedy. (RSV)

It was not an arbitrary decision. He simply could not do anything more for them. He had to let them go into the discipline of captivity. Fortunately, it was not the final awful destruction at the end of the world. But it still was discipline. And though God seemed to have abandoned them, he went with them, didn't he? He blessed Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Esther, Mordecai, Ezekiel. Think of the distinguished saints that grew up there in Babylonian captivity. But by and large, God could not work through his people as a nation at that time. He had to give them up into the discipline of captivity. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #19, "How Soon Will the Conflict Be Over?" recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/19MMCAG>

And I love to put Jeremiah with Paul. Paul grew up with the Old Testament, but he didn't understand this at first. Then after Damascus; and what a revelation came to him on the Damascus road! When the Infinite One did stop him short to be sure, but then talked so softly and so briefly to set a lesson about how you win people. Then Paul went off to restudy his Old Testament and gather all the information he could about Jesus. But nothing had been written yet. He had to learn it from others. And he put it all together. And then he comes out with these same words that Jeremiah did. "I glory in this, that I understand and know God. That He is

a God who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth; for in these things God delights.” And I think that was Paul’s message from then on.

Well, Israel missed this. And they weren’t concerned about presenting God to their neighbors. Oh, they liked to show how God had blessed them, meaning that he was perhaps a more powerful God than other gods. And Hezekiah spent so much time showing how God had blessed them, that he invited the invasion to come and steal it all. What are we Adventists known for? How God has blessed us? Or the kind of Person our God is? We often write reports how God has blessed us. How about writing about the God who blessed us? Because we don’t always look that good.

So as we’ve often discussed before, the good news is about God. It’s not about us. And our commission is to speak of him. So maybe you didn’t do too well this week. Well, don’t worry. The good news isn’t about you anyway. The good news is about him. So you’re still sick? Don’t worry. Tell about your doctor. Don’t tell about you. Of course, it would be nice to show, “I walk a little more firmly this week.” Who’s helping you? This wonderful doctor. I mean, the emphasis needs to be shifted, I believe. And Jeremiah saw this. So instead of trusting on, “the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,” they began to trust God.

And that’s true in every one of our doctrines. They all reflect back on God. God is the one who saves and heals. All he asks of us is trust. And all our doctrines are simply designed to lead us back to trust, and nothing more than the seventh-day Sabbath as we discussed last week. But if our seventh-day Sabbath keeping does not win us to love, trust and admire God, it could even be a curse. Because very careful, incredibly careful Sabbath-keeping could simply class us with those who in their carefulness rushed home from Calvary, having nailed their Lord to the cross, to carefully keep another seventh-day Sabbath. See, mere seventh-day Sabbath keeping doesn’t tell whose people we are. If we don’t keep it for the right reason, we could be keeping it in such a way we’re proving we’re Satan’s followers and not God’s. It’s the way we do it; the reason that we have for doing it.

I think that Jeremiah is magnificent here in his understanding. Surely the book of Jeremiah, like all the prophets, makes it plain that the most important thing is that we know about our God. And of course, when we come to know him, we realize that all he would ask of us is trust. In the simplest terms, “I’d like to be your God, and you be my people. I do own the whole universe that I have created. Ah, there isn’t a thing we couldn’t do together. But there are a lot of things I cannot command. I cannot force your trust, your love, your willingness to listen. I certainly can’t force you to call the Sabbath a delight. I can’t do that. But I offer it to you. You have everything to win if you will join me.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 - Jeremiah & Lamentations*, recorded February, 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/35MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/36MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. That power is Christ. Co-operation with that power is man's greatest need. {Ed 29.1}

God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve. {PK 510.4}

When men's hearts are softened and subdued by the constraining influence of the Holy Spirit, they will give heed to counsel; but when they turn from admonition until their hearts become hardened, the Lord permits them to be led by other influences. Refusing the truth, they accept falsehood, which becomes a snare to their own destruction. {PK 425.1}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP 34.3}