

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2015: *Jeremiah*

Lesson 7 “The Crisis Continues”

Read for this week’s study

Jeremiah 9; Jeremiah 10:1–15; Romans 1:25; Jeremiah 26; Acts 17:30; Acts 5:34–41.

Memory Text

“ ‘But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the LORD” (Jeremiah 9:24, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Let Him Who Boasts . . .
- III. Creatures or the Creator?
- IV. A Call to Repentance
- V. The Call for Death
- VI. Jeremiah’s Escape
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The travails and trials of God’s servant continue. In fact, pretty much all of the book of Jeremiah deals with the challenges and struggles the prophet had in trying to get the people to listen to the words that the Lord was seeking to convey to them out of love and concern. (...) It’s so easy for us today to shake our heads at the hardness of their hearts. ‘Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come’ (1 Corinthians 10:11, NKJV). We have these examples before us; what will we learn from them?” (Sabbath afternoon) What are we supposed to learn from the book of Jeremiah and the history of Judah?
2. “In Jeremiah 9, the prophet began his lamentation because he saw the inevitable catastrophe coming to his country and people.” (Sunday’s lesson) Jeremiah is sometimes called the weeping prophet. But he is not the only one weeping, for he saw the day coming when the wailing women would lament the death of the nation (9:17-21). People used their tongues like bows (9:3) to shoot the arrows of deceit (9:8) and they went “from evil to evil” (9:3). Those who know Jesus Christ can go

“from faith to faith” (Romans 1:17), “from strength to strength” (Psalm 84:7) and “from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

3. The chapter ends on a surprising note (9:23.24) which is our memory text. Have you ever gloried that you understand and know God? What about boasting? Jeremiah shows that it is not our minds, our might, or our money that wins the day, but our knowledge of God’s character!
4. “Jeremiah is telling the people what they should have already known: these pagan gods are nothing but human creations, figments of people’s own demonically warped imaginations.” (Monday’s lesson) Jeremiah 10 speaks about the idolatry (cf. Genesis 1:1; Romans 1:25). Jeremiah characterizes idols jeeringly: “Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them; they can do no harm nor can they do any good.” (10:5) Anything that draws our worship and focus away from our relationship with God today is idolatry. For many this could be a job, success, or the need to make more money. Or it might be popularity, clothes, movies, cars, sports, even grades...
5. The basic prophetic message can be summarized into three points: 1) You have broken the covenant, you must repent! 2) No repentance? Then judgment is coming! 3) Yet there is a glorious future time of restoration coming after the judgment through a righteous King, son of David, the Messiah.
6. There are usually three major indictments against God’s people: idolatry (and syncretism), social injustice for all, and religious ritualism instead of relationship. The prophets show that idolatry violates the relational aspect of the covenant; it is not only a legal problem. They use the image of an unfaithful wife to underscore the pain God feels when his people are unfaithful to him. The unfaithful wife image runs throughout Jeremiah as one of his central themes (cf. Ezekiel 16; Hosea).
7. The part for Tuesday concentrates on the call to repentance in Jeremiah 26:1-6. The call to repentance is the second aspect of prophetic message. “The message here was the same as the message all through the Bible, Old and New Testament, and that is the call to repentance, to turn away from our sin and find the salvation that God offers to all.” (Tuesday’s lesson) The prophets beg people to listen and to repent and thus restore their relationship with God.
8. “Old Testament, New Testament—in the end, the message of God is the same to all of us: we are sinners, we have done wrong, we deserve punishment. But through the Cross of Christ, through the atoning death of Jesus, God has made a way for all of us to be saved. We need to acknowledge our sinfulness, we need to claim by faith the merits of Jesus, which are freely given us despite our unworthiness, and we need to repent of our sins.” (Tuesday’s lesson) What happens when repentance is so narrowly understood? What are the consequences for our relationship with God?
9. Wednesday’s lesson notices that the leaders instead of calling for a time of prayer and fasting, called instead for the execution of God’s prophet. Jeremiah preached for decades and the response is only one of hostility. No one repents from the

greatest to the least of the people. Jonah, in contrast, preaches a short, reluctant sermon in Nineveh (of all places!), and the entire city repents, from the greatest to the least. The repentance of Nineveh underscores the inexcusable response of Judah.

10. Thursday's lesson notices that the "elders" come to the rescue of Jeremiah and guide the mob towards sanity and justice. They knew the history of the nation (quoting Micah, who lived a century before Jeremiah) and the Word of God. Jeremiah stood his ground and God [this time] protected him. Urijah ran away and was captured and killed. The safest place in the world is in the will of God, whether you live or die.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

These people, by their wickedness, have suppressed the truth, and he's going to talk in chapter 2 about the wickedness of God's professed people, who by their wickedness led Gentiles to blaspheme the name of God. That's how the truth has been suppressed, by keeping the Sabbath in the wrong way, and following the blueprint in the wrong way. This is what has turned people against God, he says in chapter 2.

For what can be known about God [that's the truth], is plain to them [because God has shown it to them]. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made [so he's talking about perception and understanding]. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools [God didn't make them fools; they became fools], and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

And he knew all those pictures in Isaiah. Remember when we did Isaiah? The man who took the tree and cut it in half, cooked his food with one half and made a god out of the other? Now he said that's senseless. He had much Old Testament to support this, but just observation would have been enough.

Think of the Egyptians, worshipping reptiles. Remember the ten plagues. They were directed toward these creatures that were worshipped; frogs, and flies. I mean, what would it do to you every evening to worship a fly?

Well, do you remember in the Kings? Remember in the days of Elijah and Elisha, the king of Israel worshipped Beelzebub, the god of flies. Now, what had happened to his mind? Had God caused his mind to be that way, or if you kneel before a fly every night, and worship the god of flies, does it eventually destroy your intelligence? Or would you prefer beetles? Or crocodiles?

These were all worshipped by the Egyptians. Goats. All kinds of strange things. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Romans*, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/61MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/62MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Some day God will unveil his glory. He longs to return this world to normal, as it was in the beginning. In Eden, God could walk and talk with our first parents without any veil between. (See Genesis 3:8-10) But ever since sin began to work its deadly changes, God in mercy has veiled his glory. As Peter explains, our heavenly Father is very patient with us, “not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9, NIV)

Repentance means changing our minds. Graciously God continues to grant us time and opportunity to consider the evidence. If we decide he can be trusted, and then go on trusting him enough to stay with him and let him heal the damage sin has done, the time will come when once again we can live in that glory.

Moses and Elijah were healed, or they could never have stood with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. On that memorable day, two former sinners stood in the unveiled glory of God. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 133-134. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter9.html>

So they're all resurrected at the end of the millennium. They're all there and there's the New Jerusalem, there's Christ in His human form, and then there's a panoramic review of the sixty-six books. I like to tell people if you don't read the sixty-six books now you'll get to read them at the end of the millennium. Wouldn't you rather do it now? And so as they look at this they're smitten but they're not smitten with genuine repentance. They are smitten the way Lucifer was when he wept and begged Jesus to take him back. And many of them cry, “Lord, Lord, open unto us, have we not done many wonderful works?” They're very much smitten. But the evidence that they are unsavable is provided by the way they die because all God does is return this planet to normal and His life-giving glory envelopes everybody, not just us in the city. And all that happens to these people who maybe even seem to repent and say, “Please let me in” all that happens is they are enveloped in the life-giving glory of God. But they are really out of harmony and they are consumed. There's nothing arbitrary, it's not imposed. It's not a decision that's made, “Let's see, I think you deserve to be destroyed.” No, it's fail safe. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, *We've Camped Around This Mountain Long*

Enough, #5, 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/5MMCAMPED>

Actually, how did the Holy Spirit come to them? Did they earn it? Did they receive the Spirit as a reward? Did God's graciousness come as a reward? Did Christ die for them as a reward? Always God is initiating this. We respond to God's graciousness; Romans 2:4. The kindness of God leads us to repentance. We don't earn it; He gives it to us. How about the Holy Spirit? Who brought the good news about God being gracious, so that we might be won back to trust? The Spirit comes first. Or don't we have to behave a while to earn the Holy Spirit? Has the Spirit been here from the beginning? Was He here during creation? Who worked on the heart of David and led him to repentance? In the 51st psalm, David says, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." Over and over in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is working. He always has been. He has always been here. {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>

Further Study with Ellen White

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. {1SM 235.1}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the 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. {1SM 235.2}

The reason why it seems so difficult to win souls for Christ, is that Satan is continually engaged in misrepresenting the character of God to the human mind. Christ came to reveal the Father to the world in his true character, that the false conceptions which men entertained of the divine character might be swept away. {RH, May 31, 1892 par. 9}

God could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God

and had misrepresented His plan of government, claiming that God was not just in imposing laws upon the angels; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. It was therefore necessary to demonstrate before the inhabitants of heaven, and of all the worlds, that God's government is just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper and his real object must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works. {PP 42.1}

The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore God permitted him to demonstrate the nature of his claims, to show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked. {PP 42.2}

Even when he was cast out of heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since only the service of love can be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of the worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted out of existence, some would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond all question. {PP 42.3}

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty. {PP 42.4}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. {GC 541.4}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to co-operate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them. {AA 532.2}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will. {5T 738.1}

It was by falsifying the character of God and exciting distrust of Him that Satan tempted Eve to transgress. By sin the minds of our first parents were darkened, their natures were degraded, and their conceptions of God were molded by their own narrowness and selfishness. And as men became bolder in sin, the knowledge and the love of God faded from their minds and hearts. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God," they "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." {5T 738.2}

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}