

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2016: *Rebellion and Redemption*

Lesson 1 “Crisis in Heaven”

Read for this week’s study

Isaiah 14:4, 12–15; Ezekiel 28:2, 12–19; John 12:31; Revelation 12:7–13; Luke 10:1–21.

Memory Text

“ ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’ ” (Revelation 7:10, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Fall in Heaven
- III. The Prince of This World
- IV. War in Heaven
- V. Satan Evicted
- VI. The Continuing Battle
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Keith Corbett

1. Why did the rebellion happen? What was the problem and what was the solution?
2. How does God’s demonstration of the consequences of evil save mankind?
3. The introduction in the quarterly states that Satan has an “insatiable passion to deface creation and to obliterate God’s people.” How has he worked to accomplish his goals and how has God responded?
4. The introduction states that “Jesus has won a decisive victory at the cross.” What was that victory, what does it do or how does it work?
5. How do you understand freedom of will and predestination?
6. “The plan of salvation is God’s way of dealing with the rebellion and restoring the order and harmony that Satan had disrupted.” (Sabbath afternoon) What is the plan of salvation and how do you understand it to work?
7. When and where did the fall (rebellion) occur?
8. How do you understand Satan’s “ownership” of the world?
9. How much of the universe is involved in the conflict, and who suffers most from the effects of sin?

10. Who is our savior? Jesus or God?
11. How does witnessing “erode the power” of Satan? (Wednesday’s lesson)
12. The battle continues—how and where is it being fought, and what is it over? What are Satan’s tactics? What are God’s tactics? Who wins and why?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But even though our heavenly Father is so gracious, even toward us who have misbehaved, the Bible incredibly describes a conflict that broke out in God’s family—even to the extent of war in Heaven. The most vivid description of this war is presented in the last of the sixty-six books of the Bible, the book of Revelation. And part of this description is on the Bible Reference Sheet, which I hope you may have in your hand. Notice the first one, Revelation 12:7-12, a description of the war: . . .

Now when we read this passage about the war in Heaven, it’s good to reflect that before there was war, there was peace. And there was peace throughout the whole universe. There was peace because all the members of God’s vast family trusted each other. And all of them trusted their heavenly Father. And He in turn could safely trust in them. Where there is such mutual trust and trustworthiness, there is perfect freedom, perfect peace, perfect security. And that’s the way it’s going to be in the hereafter. You notice the Bible never talks about prisons in the Promised Land. There will be no police on every corner. And our wives and daughters will safely walk the streets alone at any hour. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #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>*

Is there anything more desirable than for people to live together as described in Psalm 133:1? I know of no greater happiness than to be in the company of trusted and trusting friends—all working for the best good of everyone else, no jealousy or suspicion, everyone placing the kindest possible interpretation upon one another’s actions and words.

Such unity and goodwill can exist only where there is complete trust and trustworthiness, mutual love and respect.

But the Bible pictures the whole human race as caught up in a great web of distrust. It is all part of the universe-wide crisis of trust that centers around the questioning of the trustworthiness of God himself.

Our infinite God has been accused of untrustworthiness. But God has answered this accusation. And the way he has met the charge is the most convincing evidence of his utter worthiness of our faith.

The Bible is a record of the long and costly demonstration of the trustworthiness of God. If trust could be produced by claims or exhortation, the Bible would be a very different book. But claims of trustworthiness are worth no more than the trustworthiness of the one making them. Thus even when a person has been falsely accused, mere claims or denials prove nothing. Only by the demonstration of trustworthiness over a long period of time and under a variety of circumstances can trustworthiness be convincingly established. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 9-10. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-01>

But moved by jealousy and pride, the most brilliant of all God's creatures—the one pictured in Ezekiel as standing in the very presence of God; the one pictured in Isaiah as knowing God so well that he went forth from the presence of God bearing light and truth to his fellow angels; (and that's why he was given the name *Lucifer*, which means bearer of light, teacher of truth—that's one of the names of Jesus Christ Himself). But this brilliant, most trusted, even revered angel, set out to undermine trust in God by circulating misinformation and lies about our heavenly Father. And thus he became—not a bearer of light and a teacher of truth, but a bearer of lies, even *The Adversary*. And the name that means adversary is *Satan*. You can see why we shouldn't call him Lucifer any longer. He no longer bears light, but lies. His real name is Satan—the opponent, the adversary.

And how this adversary worked among the angels! In his pretentiously pious manner he insinuated that God Himself was an untrustworthy liar. And specifically he charged that God was arbitrary—not respectful of the freedom of His children; that God was exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. And thus he hoped to turn the angels away from God, and win them to worship *him*, himself. It seems unbelievable that a creature could presume to think of himself as God, and suggest that angels worship him. But that Satan is actually capable of such insanity, look at the scripture that's second on this Bible Reference Sheet, in Isaiah 14:12-14. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #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>

Who would dare to question the integrity of God? Who would dare suggest that God cannot be trusted? Yet with this incredible accusation, the Biblical account of human history begins.

The one who raised this charge had not always been God's enemy. He is pictured first as highly honored, standing in the very presence of our heavenly Father. As God's trusted spokesman he went out among his fellow angels bearing light and truth. He was called "the Light Bearer"—sometimes translated "Lucifer" or "Morning Star"—a name belonging also to the Son of God himself (see Ezekiel 28:14; Isaiah 14:12; 2 Peter 1:19; Revelation 22:16).

But Jesus later called him "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). The last book in the Bible describes him as "that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world" (Revelation 12:9).

"Of course you will not die," the serpent said to Eve. "God knows that as soon as you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing both good and evil" (Genesis 3:4, 5, NEB, margin). "God has no respect for your freedom and dignity as intelligent individuals," Satan argued. "In selfish tyranny he is depriving you of knowledge and experience that are rightfully yours. He has lied and is not worthy of your trust."

With such falsehoods Satan had already led one third of the angels to side with him against God. Though he is a created being, he had come to think of himself as divine. "I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13, 14). Insane pride led him later even to ask Jesus, his Creator, to bow down and worship him (Matthew 4:8–10).

To set himself up as God he first must undermine confidence in the One he wished to supplant, and he sought to do this by destroying God's reputation. Since he could find no fault in God, he must resort to deceit.

So began that long struggle for the loyalty of God's free, intelligent creatures. Who was right—God or the brilliant Light Bearer? Could it be true that God was arbitrary and severe, unworthy of the love and trust of the beings he had made? What kind of god would allow his character to be so challenged? Was it strength or weakness that led him to permit such long debate, to allow this controversy to spread throughout his universe?

Finally Satan and his followers even ventured into open revolt. Then God, in his farsighted plan for the best good of all concerned, expelled the rebels from his presence, and the great controversy was extended to the planet on which we live.

As described in the frequently symbolic language of the Book of Revelation, "Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels waged war upon the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought, but they had not the strength to win, and no foothold was left them in heaven. So the great dragon was thrown down, that serpent of old that led the whole world astray, whose name is Satan, or the Devil—thrown down to the earth, and his angels with him. . . . But woe to you, earth and sea, for the Devil has come down to you in great fury, knowing that his time is

short!" (Revelation 12:7–9, 12, NEB). {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 13-15. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-02>

Lou: If the war was won, and you referred to God's winning the war at Calvary, then why isn't it over? Why is it still going on?" I'm sure that you need a long time to share with us the meaning behind that.

Graham: We want to know why, when He threw them out of Heaven, He hadn't won the war?

Lou: Yes. Why didn't it end there?

Graham: Obviously it was a victory, a physical victory. They had been thrown out. God is not satisfied when that's all that has been accomplished. There were still unresolved questions and wonderings among His family. And so He waited. But then when Jesus said, "It's finished," something was finished. And Revelation says He was recognized as having won the war. So why does He still wait? Is it that the war has been won in the minds of His children throughout the universe, but not here on this planet? We're still trying to make up our minds. And it's essential that we not only make up our minds, but be so settled into it that we cannot be moved during the terrible days that Jesus spoke of, and Daniel, and Paul, and John; these events that will happen before the second coming. In mercy He waits. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #1, with Lou Venden, "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>

Recommended Listening:

Conversations About God #1 "The Conflict In God's Family" is available at:

<http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>; *Conversations About God* #2 "What Went Wrong In God's Universe?" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/2MMCAG>

Recommended Reading:

Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?* is available at:

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters>

Further Study with Ellen White

The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. "The truth shall make you free;" and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by

enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one's self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is “the law of liberty.” James 2:12. {DA 466.5}

In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, “let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” Romans 14:12, 5. In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to the earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to co-operate with men in uplifting humanity. {DA 550.6}

Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. They are invited by the Saviour, “Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.” Isaiah 27:5. The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion, but angels of God will contend for that soul with prevailing power. The Lord says, “Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? . . . Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.” Isaiah 49:24, 25. {DA 258.6}

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 law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent

appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

In His dealing with sin, God could employ only righteousness and truth. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. {GC 498.1}

The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the law and 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 it was necessary that he should demonstrate the nature of his claims, and 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. {GC 498.2}

Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since the service of love can alone 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 other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted from existence, they 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. Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might forever be placed beyond all question. {GC 498.3}

In great mercy, according to His divine character, God bore long with Lucifer. The spirit of discontent and disaffection had never before been known in heaven. It was a new element, strange, mysterious, unaccountable. Lucifer himself had not at first been acquainted with the real nature of his feelings; for a time he had feared to express the workings and imaginings of his mind; yet he did not dismiss them. He did not see whither he was drifting. But such efforts as infinite love and wisdom only could devise, were made to convince him of his error. His disaffection was proved to be without cause, and he was made to see what would be the result of persisting in revolt. Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong. He saw that “the Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works” (Psalm 145:17); that the divine statutes are just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at that time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had left his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator’s wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God’s great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office. The time had come for a final

decision; he must fully yield to the divine sovereignty or place himself in open rebellion. He nearly reached the decision to return, but pride forbade him. It was too great a sacrifice for one who had been so highly honored to confess that he had been in error, that his imaginings were false, and to yield to the authority which he had been working to prove unjust. {PP 39.1}

A compassionate Creator, in yearning pity for Lucifer and his followers, was seeking to draw them back from the abyss of ruin into which they were about to plunge. But His mercy was misinterpreted. Lucifer pointed to the long-suffering of God as an evidence of his own superiority, an indication that the King of the universe would yet accede to his terms. If the angels would stand firmly with him, he declared, they could yet gain all that they desired. He persistently defended his own course, and fully committed himself to the great controversy against his Maker. Thus it was that Lucifer, “the light bearer,” the sharer of God’s glory, the attendant of His throne, by transgression became Satan, “the adversary” of God and holy beings and the destroyer of those whom Heaven had committed to his guidance and guardianship. {PP 39.2}

God permitted Satan to carry forward his work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all. Lucifer, as the anointed cherub, had been highly exalted; he was greatly loved by the heavenly beings, and his influence over them was strong. God’s government included not only the inhabitants of heaven, but of all the worlds that He had created; and Lucifer had concluded that if he could carry the angels of heaven with him in rebellion, he could carry also all the worlds. He had artfully presented his side of the question, employing sophistry and fraud to secure his objects. His power to deceive was very great. By disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood, he had gained an advantage. All his acts were so clothed with mystery that it was difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his work. Until fully developed, it could not be made to appear the evil thing it was; his disaffection would not be seen to be rebellion. Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character or see to what his work was leading. {PP 41.2}

Lucifer had at first so conducted his temptations that he himself stood uncommitted. The angels whom he could not bring fully to his side, he accused of indifference to the interests of heavenly beings. The very work which he himself was doing, he charged upon the loyal angels. It was his policy to perplex with subtle arguments concerning the purposes of God. Everything that was simple he shrouded in mystery, and by artful perversion cast doubt upon the plainest statements of Jehovah. And his high position, so closely connected with the divine government, gave greater force to his representations. {PP 41.3}

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}

Recommended Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets* Chapter 1 – “Why was Sin Permitted?”; *Desire of Ages* Chapter 1—“God With Us” & chapter 70—“It Is Finished”; *The Great Controversy* chapter 29—“The Origin of Evil”; *Steps to Christ* chapter 1—“God's Love for Man”

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