

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2016: *Rebellion and Redemption*
Lesson 2 “Crisis in Eden”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 1:28, Romans 8:17, Matthew 6:26, Genesis 2:15–17, 3:1–7, 10–19.

Memory Text

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Three Blessings
- III. The Test at the Tree
- IV. The Fall: Part One
- V. The Fall: Part Two
- VI. The Consequences
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week we will look at how Satan was able to exploit human freedom and, thus, start the devastation that we all experience even today. The story of the Fall remains a powerful reminder that our only safety as human beings exists in not only believing what God tells us but, more importantly, in obeying what He tells us, as well.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. How can we avoid the risk of approaching our study of the Bible in such a way that we “examine the trees but miss the forest”? We can deal with the Bible verse by verse, even word by word, examining the text (sometimes even in the original language) and its application, but there is a danger in getting so caught up in the detail that we completely miss the whole picture. This can lead us to miss the point of the Bible story.
3. Surely believing what God tells us and more importantly obeying it is good and essential. But that is not the point of the story of the Fall. Moses did the exact opposite of this in Exodus 32:9, 10: “I have seen these people,” the Lord said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger

may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.” Yet (and maybe that’s why) he is a great Bible hero.

4. What steps can we take in our reading the Bible, to avoid the trap of pietism? Adventism started from Puritan roots, and we have a leaning towards pietistic reading—an emphasis on individual piety and living a vigorous Christian life. Yet the genius of Adventism is in seeing the Bible as a unified story, seeing the storyline, interpreting it within the Great Controversy framework. The pioneers said: “We have no creed, but the Bible.” While Methodism and the Holiness movement (as roots of Adventism) grew out of German Pietism, it is still an eighteenth & nineteenth century way of reading the Bible. How can we avoid the risks of preserving and spreading an obsolete or one-sided reading of the Bible and grow instead into sharing the Bible story in a way that is relevant in today’s world?
5. What is the significance of the fact that Genesis 3:8, 9 is missing from the list of verses to be studied this week? Do we risk missing the bigger picture of the story if we leave these verses out?
6. “The third blessing given in the Creation story is the seventh-day Sabbath (Genesis 2:3). Here is further confirmation that people are far more than just animals; they were created to enjoy fellowship with the Creator in ways none of the other creatures can. Here we see unmistakable evidence of the special place humans have been given in the Creation.” (Sunday’s lesson) What is the significance of this blessing?
7. “God created everything by a series of separations with clearly defined boundaries: light and darkness, waters above and waters below, land and sea, night and day, creatures according to their kind, a day separated from the others, a woman separated from a man, and a tree set apart from the others.” “How is the idea of separation revealed here, in this test of their obedience to God?” “The division is clear and concrete: eat from all the other trees, but not from this distinct one, which was separate from the others. There was nothing ambiguous about God’s words. Adam and Eve were created as moral beings, and morality cannot exist without freedom. Here was a test to see what they would do with that freedom.” (Monday’s lesson) Who is the test for? Didn’t God know what Adam and Eve would do with their freedom? What is the significance of seeing the story as a test of obedience?
8. “The first words uttered by the snake were words of cynicism and doubt: ‘Did God really say?’ (Genesis 3:1, NIV). (...) The tempter made it appear that God was not only dishonest but also withholding something good from them.” (Tuesday’s lesson) Why is doubt and cynicism so bad? Can God’s children, while having good intentions, imply that God is withholding something from His children? What is the significance of Eve adding to what God actually said?
9. “God was the original provider of their food, but part of the rebellion involved Adam and Eve choosing something to eat outside of God-given boundaries. It would be like being invited to someone’s home for a meal and, instead of eating from their table, you go to their cupboard or refrigerator and help yourself to something that attracts

you. Not only would that be an insult to your hosts, but it would also show that you do not value your relationship with them.” (Wednesday’s lesson) Of course, this understanding depends on one’s culture; in some cultures this would be perfectly acceptable! What is the essence of this temptation and “original” sin? What makes it so bad?

10. “There had to be another way to ensure the future of the human race. So, God provided an animal sacrifice (Genesis 3:21). It was a creature, a snake, that had introduced them to sin, loss, and fractured relationships; it would be a creature, a lamb, that would point forward to the Deliverer, who would ensure restoration, reconciliation, and a future (see Genesis 3:15).” (Thursday’s lesson) Were the animal sacrifices a solution or only an illustration of the solution that God would provide? What is the actual solution of the problem of sin?
11. What is the significance of the fact that the Garden of Eden is portrayed as a sanctuary? Could it be that the serpent provides a different worldview, different first principles than the biblical worldview? What is the significance of God’s double response (blessings & curses)? How will the following Bible narrative work with that as a pattern of God’s dealing with sin? What are the consequences of our understanding of the Fall for our practical living?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The first mention of death in the Bible is in God’s solemn warning in the Garden of Eden: “In the day that you eat of it you shall die” (Genesis 2:17).

Satan has denied the truthfulness of these words. “You will not die,” he asserted to Adam and Eve. “It is perfectly safe—in fact, highly beneficial—to eat the fruit of this tree. You cannot depend on God always to tell you the truth. This is why it is not wise or safe to place full trust in Him” (see Genesis 3:1–6).

But Satan has not only denied the truthfulness of God’s words of warning; he has also led to a perversion of their true meaning. The enemy of God and man, who would have us fear our heavenly Father as arbitrary, unforgiving, and severe, has led to the misunderstanding of this warning as a harsh demand for obedience under penalty of death.

What a baleful effect this distortion of the truth has had worldwide! How it has poisoned people’s attitude toward God and their practice of religion! Obey, or face execution at the hands of an angry God. How could this satanic view have met with such wide acceptance?

For thousands of years men have offered sacrifice—sometimes even their own children—to win the favor of offended gods. Even in the Christian world some teach that had it not been for Christ’s appeasement of a wrathful God, we would long ere this have been destroyed; and but for his Son’s constant pleading in our behalf the Father could not find it in his heart to forgive and heal us sinners.

But need anything be done to persuade God to love his children?

Nothing is more emphatic in Scripture than that God has always loved—even his most wayward child. The consistent testimony of all sixty-six books is that our heavenly Father loves us as he loves his Son.

When God said, “In the day that you eat of it, you shall die,” he was uttering no arbitrary threat. In love for his created beings, he was only warning of the consequences of sin.

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 life-giving glory of his presence. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 74-75. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-08>

God even gave Satan an opportunity to approach our first parents at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And God did not hide that tree in some dark corner of Eden. He placed it in the middle of the garden so that Adam and Eve would see it every time they came to eat at the tree of life (see Genesis 2:9; 3:2). Of course we could trust God not to allow his children to be tempted beyond their power to resist (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). So Satan’s approaches were limited to the tree, and Adam and Eve were warned not to risk a confrontation with the wily foe. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 128. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002} <http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-12>

Take a little thing like the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not to eat the fruit of that tree in the Garden. In the narrower view, in the view that is preoccupied with what God has done for us on this planet, God said, “Don’t touch that tree” *before* sin. And that would simply be a test of their obedience, and it’s often so explained. But in the larger, great controversy view, they were told not to go near that tree *after* sin entered the universe. And then you look on the tree, not as a test of obedience, but as something given to us to protect us, because Lucifer could only approach them at the tree. And he did! And so the more one takes the larger view, the more arbitrariness goes out of God’s requirements, and His measures, and His provisions. He just looks a whole lot better in the great controversy view. {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>

He could have created the world with a snap of His fingers, couldn't He? Has He always taken that long to create each of the billions and billions of worlds? Or because the controversy has begun, the charges have been laid, and a third of the angels have accepted them as true, might this be the background for God doing what He did? No one was hurrying Him during creation week. With great majesty and unhurried drama, God unfolded His plan for our world. Day one, "Let there be light." Day two, three, four, five; the world is a beautiful place. God doesn't look very selfish by Thursday evening. What a beautiful place He's planned for the people that He will permit to dwell there. And then on Friday He creates the first man and the first woman. Why do you think He made us male and female? It's caused all kinds of complications ever since, hasn't it? Why do you think He did this? It seems to me one of the most wonderful things God ever did, was to share as much of His creative power with us mere humans as He possibly could. A selfish God? Abusing His divine power and selfishly using it?

Satan wants to be like God, to be a creator-god. What better way could there be, than for God to create us male and female, with the amazing arrangement, that when a man and a woman come together in love, they have the power to create little people in their own image. Now, we're only creatures, we're not God, so we don't quite know how we do this, but we've been given this amazing ability. If all goes well, and wouldn't it be just like God to have it happen in an atmosphere of love? Wouldn't it be just like the devil to pervert this as much as he could? But under ideal circumstances, out of that relationship, we have the power to create little people, and they surely are in our own image unto the third and fourth generation. It's interesting to me to watch grandchildren coming along. And I recognize things still there. Good ones and some other kinds too; they're still there. How amazing, that God would share His creative power with us to that extent, and the angels looking on must have been stunned. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Genesis*, 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/1MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

And how about the Friday of creation week? And all the days before? Was the Sabbath given to man before or after sin?

That's on this planet. Should we be so limited in our view? How about in the universe?

When was the war up in heaven? Did they not meet the adversary in the Garden? He was already the enemy of God and man. Everything given during creation week was an emergency measure, added because of sin. We were given that first Sabbath; in fact, we were visitors that

first Sabbath, as you know. And I've often wondered where that little red ribbon would be attached, under the circumstances prevailing at that time. But we were only visitors.

The second one was our first seventh day, wasn't it, really? The second one. The first one was when the Lord and His children throughout the universe, the watching angels, celebrated what God had done that week. The beauty of it all. The unselfishness of it all. The freedom. Even allowing the adversary to approach the two. Think of doing that! But God did not let them be tested more than they were able to bear. Satan could only meet them at the tree, which was not so much a test of obedience as a provision to protect them. Just as the law could be seen as a test of obedience, or as something to protect us, you see.

So right away those provisions—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—could be viewed as part of the *"paidagogos"* to protect us, to guard us. If they had been obedient to the law, in the garden, right away, and not gone to the tree, they would not have confronted their wily foe, and collapsed as they did. It wasn't given to deprive them of freedom, but to protect their freedom.

And then on Friday, creating a man and a woman, and sharing His creative power with us, so that we could actually share in this incredible experience of creating little people in our own image. For God had been accused of being selfish in this regard, by the one who wanted to be God, and create, but couldn't, because he was only a creature. Think of all the things said about God during creation week, and we remember this on Friday. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Galatians*, recorded May, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>

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.

{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}

It was God’s original design that man should remain under the influence of His life-giving Spirit for the rest of eternity. Under the vitalizing power of the Spirit man was to continue to grow in strength, wisdom, and maturity of character. As the years went by, he would ever more fully reflect the image of his Creator, along with all the other intelligent beings throughout the universe, who are equally dependent upon God’s Spirit for eternal life and happiness.

But man sinned and found himself thrust out into a world that became increasingly filled with sadness, disappointment, frustration, sickness, and death.

Adam and Eve saw their oldest son murder his brother. They watched most of their children leave home to build cities where they could give themselves up to lives of utter rebelliousness and self-indulgence. For almost a thousand years Adam grieved over the results of his sin in Eden.

But God did not leave sinful man without help and encouragement. Even though man’s life was to grow shorter, yet he could still remain under the influence of the life-giving Spirit of God.

When he was weighed down with sorrow, the Spirit would bring counsel and comfort, as Jesus explained to His disciples. See John 14. The Greek word translated “Comforter” in the King James Version also means “helper,” “adviser.”

When he was confused and perplexed by what he saw in the world, the Spirit would lead into truth. John 16:13.

When he was troubled, the Spirit would bring joy and peace. Galatians 5:22.

When he was tempted to give in to the urges of his sinful nature, the Spirit would bring self-control, the last of the fruits of the Spirit, as Paul listed them for the Galatian believers. “Self-mastery” or “self-control” is the meaning of the word usually translated “temperance” in the King James Version.

Thus under the guidance and stimulus of the Spirit of God, man would be able to stand up and face a hard life in an evil world. {Maxwell, A. Graham. *I Want to be Free*, 47-48. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1970}

Further Study with Ellen White

No longer free to stir up rebellion in heaven, Satan's enmity against God found a new field in plotting the ruin of the human race. In the happiness and peace of the holy pair in Eden he beheld a vision of the bliss that to him was forever lost. Moved by envy, he determined to incite them to disobedience, and bring upon them the guilt and penalty of sin. He would change their love to distrust and their songs of praise to reproaches against their Maker. Thus he would not only plunge these innocent beings into the same misery which he was himself enduring, but would cast dishonor upon God, and cause grief in heaven. {PP 52.1}

God instructed our first parents in regard to the tree of knowledge, and they were fully informed relative to the fall of Satan, and the danger of listening to his suggestions. He did not deprive them of the power of eating the forbidden fruit. He left them as free moral agents to believe His word, obey His commandments, and live, or believe the tempter, disobey, and perish. They both ate, and the great wisdom they obtained was the knowledge of sin and a sense of guilt. The covering of light about them soon disappeared, and under a sense of guilt and loss of their divine covering, a shivering seized them, and they tried to cover their exposed forms. {SR 37.1}

Our first parents chose to believe the words, as they thought, of a serpent; yet he had given them no tokens of his love. He had done nothing for their happiness and benefit, while God had given them everything that was good for food and pleasant to the sight. Everywhere the eye might rest was abundance and beauty; yet Eve was deceived by the serpent, to think that there was something withheld which would make them wise, even as God. Instead of believing and confiding in God, she basely distrusted His goodness and cherished the words of Satan. {SR 37.2}

In the Garden of Eden was the "tree of knowledge of good and evil. . . . And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat." Genesis 2:9-17. It was the will of God that Adam and Eve should not know evil. The knowledge of good had been freely given them; but the knowledge of evil,—of sin and its results, of wearing toil, of anxious care, of disappointment and grief, of pain and death,—this was in love withheld. {Ed 23.2}

While God was seeking man's good, Satan was seeking his ruin. When Eve, disregarding the Lord's admonition concerning the forbidden tree, ventured to approach it, she came in contact with her foe. Her interest and curiosity having been awakened, Satan proceeded to deny God's word, and to insinuate distrust of His wisdom and goodness. To the woman's statement concerning the tree of knowledge, "God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die," the tempter made answer, "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:3-5. {Ed 23.3}

Satan desired to make it appear that this knowledge of good mingled with evil would be a blessing, and that in forbidding them to take of the fruit of the tree, God was withholding great good. He urged that it was because of its wonderful properties for imparting wisdom and power that God had forbidden them to taste it, that He was thus seeking to prevent them from reaching a nobler development and finding greater happiness. He declared that he himself had eaten of the forbidden fruit, and as a result had acquired the power of speech; and that if they also would eat of it, they would attain to a more exalted sphere of existence and enter a broader field of knowledge. {Ed 24.1}

Man lost all because he chose to listen to the deceiver rather than to Him who is Truth, who alone has understanding. By the mingling of evil with good, his mind had become confused, his mental and spiritual powers benumbed. No longer could he appreciate the good that God had so freely bestowed. {Ed 25.3}

Angels of God visited Adam and Eve, and told them of the fall of Satan, and warned them to be on their guard. They cautioned them not to separate from each other in their employment, for they might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. If one of them were alone, they would be in greater danger than if both were together. The angels enjoined upon them to closely follow the instructions God had given them, for in perfect obedience they were safe, and this fallen foe could then have no power to deceive them. God would not permit Satan to follow the holy pair with continual temptations. He could have access to them only at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. {3SG 39.1}

With the earliest history of man, Satan began his efforts to deceive our race. He who had incited rebellion in heaven desired to bring the inhabitants of the earth to unite with him in his warfare against the government of God. Adam and Eve had been perfectly happy in obedience to the law of God, and this fact was a constant testimony against the claim which Satan had urged in heaven, that God's law was oppressive and opposed to the good of His creatures. And furthermore, Satan's envy was excited as he looked upon the beautiful home prepared for the sinless pair. He determined to cause their fall, that, having separated them from God and brought them under his own power, he might gain possession of the earth and here establish his kingdom in opposition to the Most High. {GC 531.1}

Had Satan revealed himself in his real character, he would have been repulsed at once, for Adam and Eve had been warned against this dangerous foe; but he worked in the dark, concealing his purpose, that he might more effectually accomplish his object. {GC 531.2}

Eve really believed the words of Satan, but her belief did not save her from the penalty of sin. She disbelieved the words of God, and this was what led to her fall. In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth.

Notwithstanding the sophistry of Satan to the contrary, it is always disastrous to disobey God. We must set our hearts to know what is truth. All the lessons which God has caused to be placed on record in His word are for our warning and instruction. They are given to save us from deception. Their neglect will result in ruin to ourselves. Whatever contradicts God's word, we may be sure proceeds from Satan. {PP 55.2}

Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents, with all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. {DA 24.2}

Let none suppose that because they have been used as the Lord's instrumentalities, they are all-sufficient. The Lord uses men and honors them by giving them His wisdom, as long as they are true to Him, and do not gather glory to themselves. Those who take themselves out of the Lord's hands, and think themselves capable of managing the work, are not led by His Spirit, but by "another spirit." Satan steps in, and they change leaders. Then comes the crookedness and subtlety of the serpent's guile—*Manuscript 37*, May 1, 1903, "Directions for Work." {UL 135.6}