

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2016: *Rebellion and Redemption*
Lesson 6 “*Victory in the Wilderness*”

Read for this week’s study

Matthew 1:20–23, John 9:39, Matthew 3:7–12, 4:1–10, Deuteronomy 34:1–4, Revelation 21:10.

Memory Text

“ ‘For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost’ ” (Luke 19:10, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Immanuel to the Rescue
- III. Jesus’ Baptism
- IV. Stones Into Bread
- V. Another Temptation
- VI. Devil Worship
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week, as we look at the temptations in the wilderness, we can see, as perhaps never before so clearly revealed in the Bible, the great controversy between Christ and Satan as it is openly battled out between them. Satan had claimed the world as his, and Christ came to win it back. And central to His winning it back was the plan of salvation. Having failed to kill Jesus after His birth, Satan tried another way to sabotage the redemption of the race. This we see unfold in the wilderness temptations.” (Sabbath afternoon) Is the plan of salvation central to winning the war in the universe, or is it a by-product of clearing God’s character? No question, God wins the war! Though He will not win (save) all of His children—our freedom to choose is that important to Him.
2. “Why did Jesus come to this earth to be “with us”? First, He came to restore the dominion that Adam lost (Romans 5:12, 15). Second, He came to bring judgment and to destroy the works of the devil (John 9:39, 1 John 3:8). Third, Jesus came into the world to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10) and to take away their sins (John 1:29). Finally, Jesus came to show us what God is like, to reveal to us—and to the onlooking universe—what His true character really is (John 14:9).” (Sunday’s lesson) In what order would YOU list the reasons for Christ’s coming and why?

3. Matthew tells us who Jesus is in a typical Jewish fashion: by His special names. The name “Jesus” was a popular boys’ name at that time. In Hebrew it was the same as ‘Joshua’ who brought the Israelites into the Promised Land after the death of Moses. Matthew sees Jesus as the one who will now complete what the law of Moses pointed to but could not of itself produce. He will rescue His people, not from slavery in Egypt, but from slavery of sin, from the ‘exile’ they have suffered not just in Babylon, but in their own land, their own hearts and lives.
4. By contrast, the name ‘Emmanuel’ mentioned in Isaiah 7:14 and 8:8 was not given to anyone else. It means ‘God with us’. Matthew’s whole gospel is framed by this theme – at the very end, Jesus promises that He will be ‘with’ His people to the end of ages (28:20).
5. “People saw John come from the wilderness and encourage them to pass through the waters of the Jordan through baptism. This was a bit like a new Exodus, and getting wet (rather than walking across a dried-up riverbed) was necessary for cleansing and readiness for the new Promised Land, with the Messiah Himself leading them from victory over the Romans to the ushering in of God’s eternal kingdom spoken of by the prophets.” (Monday’s lesson) What is the significance of John’s preaching and Jesus’ baptism?
6. “The gospel account says that after 40 days Jesus was hungry (Matthew 4:2). Then someone appears with ‘helpful’ advice, a bit like Job’s comforters. This was not the first time Satan is depicted as coming to ‘help’ someone in crisis. [See Zechariah 3]” (Tuesday’s lesson)
7. The first temptation is connected with the words Jesus has heard: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” You are my Son, my beloved one! – If you are God’s Son, surely He can’t want you to go hungry when you have the power to get food for yourself! Surely you want people to see who you are! Why not do something really spectacular? The first temptation is to act independently of the Father, to fulfill a legitimate need using illegitimate means to do so.
8. “Jesus was not interested in cheap theatrics. His trust in God was genuine, not something contrived to impress others. Jesus’ complete trust in His Father was manifested in His leaving heaven and becoming a human being, suffering the indignation, the misrepresentation, the public humiliation, and the injustice of His death (see Philippians 2:5–8).” (Wednesday’s lesson)
9. In contrast to the first, a temptation to independence, Satan’s second temptation was to overdependence – *to expect God to do what He had not promised*. We may not be tempted to jump off a high building, but do we ever unnecessarily place ourselves in dangerous situations, even for the sake of a worthy cause? Do we ever refuse to take necessary medical precautions, or expect God to bless our work (even though we did not put forth much effort); or perhaps pray without working, or do good works to be seen by people and then expect God to bless us?

10. “This test focused on loyalty. Who should the human race give ultimate loyalty to? In Eden, when Adam and Eve gave in to the serpent, they were really giving Satan their first loyalty, and that infection spread quickly through each successive generation.” (Thursday’s lesson)
11. This temptation comes to us when whenever we are tempted to shift our loyalty to something or someone other than God for some present honor, position, pleasure or enjoyment. The devil does not offer us the kingdoms of the world; he knows that far less than that will satisfy us. Why offer the throne of Egypt, if a mess of pottage will do? This is a temptation to take a short-cut. “I know why you are here,” the devil says to Jesus. “I can help you achieve that goal without dying...” How often are we tempted to take a shortcut; to achieve what is good by questionable means?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

If we believe that Jesus Christ is God, when we talk about Christ we are talking about God anyway. And doesn't Jesus make it perfectly clear that the whole purpose of His coming to this earth is to reveal the truth about His Father? Which of course is the truth about Himself, if we believe He's God. So whether we talk about God or Christ, we're talking about God. But I think it adds focus to our discussion to say the ultimate question really is about God. But He came in human form as Christ; this is the ultimate method He used to reveal the truth about Himself. So I think this is much ado about nothing when you say, “Shall we talk about God, or shall we talk about Christ?”

Lou: Then if I'm hearing you rightly, you're saying that Jesus Himself would really be happiest if we're talking about the One He came to reveal.

Graham: I'm impressed that when He was here, He would suggest, “Look, don't look to me, look to the Father.” It says we should always outdo one another in giving honor. The Trinity does that. The Son is always outdoing Himself to give honor to the Father. But I notice it comes back the other way—the Father gives the Son a name above every other name. And the Holy Spirit in a self-effacing way is always drawing our attention to the Father and the Son. The way those three divine persons behave is a model to us. {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>

And the devil came with three temptations that had to have real persuasiveness in them, or it's mockery. Then the devil takes Him up onto the pinnacle of the temple and says, "Throw yourself down." Isn't that again saying, "Don't you want to know if you enjoy God's favor? Are you really the Son of God? Don't you want another miracle?" He said, "No, I still don't want a miracle." And then he appeared in his real form as His old adversary, because now it was important that he identify himself, because he was going to offer something. He said, "I'll give you this whole world if you'll do something." Was the offer worth anything?

COMMENT: It was an act of worship.

Well, that's the first part, where he says, "to worship me," which we need to concentrate on. I'm just wondering if the offer was worth anything. "I'll give you the whole world." Of course, what would he mean by giving the whole world? Did Jesus know in advance what a painful experience it was going to be to fight the devil every step of the way? Do you think the devil would mean it when he said, "Look, you can have this world and everybody in it. I'll never bother you again." I think he would. He doesn't want it. Would you want it? In the condition that it's in? Does he even want the people in it? Doesn't he only use people to make a point? What is it the devil wants more than anything else in the great controversy? In Ezekiel, in Isaiah, what is it that he's wanted? "I will be like the Most High. I will sit in the sides of the North." He has wanted worship, and the ultimate evidence of this is he even asked his Creator to get down on His knees, the other Lucifer, the other Covering Cherub, the other Lightbearer, "Get down on your knees and worship me, and I mean it. I'll give you this whole world. I'll never bother you. You can have all those people. It'll make your work much easier. And if your goal is to just to win souls; [if that's our goal, just to win lots and lots of souls], it will be much easier for you to do so."

But He would have lost the important issue in the great controversy. That's the more important thing. And all the angels were watching. They knew what the devil has wanted all along, and a third of them have been worshipping him. And Jesus said, of course, "Worship the creature rather than the Creator? Never!" And the devil left Him. And I think apart from the great controversy, that third temptation doesn't mean a whole lot. But in the setting of the great controversy, it was an offer; of course an unthinkable one, as you've suggested, to Christ. But to the devil, not really quite so unthinkable. If only he could have that one thing! In Revelation 13, when the devil completes his final campaign, what's the whole world doing, but worshipping him. At last he seems to succeed, except for a few, who at risk of life will not do so. So this thing isn't over yet. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God* in all 66 – Luke, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Recommended Listening:

Conversations About God session 8 “The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence” is available at: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God’s thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, “I have declared unto them Thy name,”—“merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,”—“that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God’s wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which “angels desire to look,” and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which “seeketh not her own” has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19.2}

Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Through the accumulated misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character. {RH, November 17, 1891 par. 6}

The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,—to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, “I have manifested thy name.” “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God

announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 9}

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, veiling His glory and humbling Himself, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed in unfolding its record of His own condescending grace. In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father.—Letter 83, 1895.

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}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {8T 286.4}

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which flesh is heir. He has represented Him as a God who delights in the sufferings of His creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone human reason. {CT 27.2}

Recommended Reading: *Desire of Ages* Chapter 1 – "God With Us" and chapter 11 "The Baptism" <https://egwwritings.org/>