

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2016: *Rebellion and Redemption*
Lesson 10 “Paul *and the Rebellion*”

Read for this week’s study

Romans 5:12–21, 1 Corinthians 3:12–17, 1 Corinthians 12:14–26, Ephesians 6:11–17,
1 Corinthians 15:12–18.

Memory Text

“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory’” (1 Corinthians 15:54, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Adam and Jesus
- III. The Church “Building”
- IV. The Church as a Body
- V. The Armor of God
- VI. The Last Enemy
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The lesson author suggests that Paul’s writings “abound” with the Great Controversy theme. Where in Paul’s writings can that theme be found? Are there passages not mentioned in the lesson that also have a cosmic perspective? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Ephesians 1:3-14. According to this passage, what is the central outcome of the cosmic conflict? How is the conflict resolved?
3. Read Romans 5:12-21. How is the cosmic conflict revealed in these verses? (Sunday’s lesson)
4. Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-17. What are some of the metaphors Paul uses for “church” in this passage? What do these metaphors have to do with the cosmic conflict? Compare 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 with Matthew 7:24-27. What are the two characteristics in these texts that may reveal which side of the great controversy people are on? How would you define the word “church?” How can we know when we are building up the church or tearing it down? (Monday’s lesson)

5. Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-26. What is the essential message of this passage? What implications does this passage have for disagreements in the church? What insights from the health sciences might enlighten the way we use the body metaphor for the church today? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. Read Ephesians 6:11-17. What do these verses tell us about how real and personal spiritual warfare is? At a very practical level, how do we participate in that conflict when most people do not perceive Satan's presence in the contemporary world? What does the fullness and completeness of the armor tell us about our total dependence upon God in the great controversy? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-18. What are the consequences that come with denying the resurrection of the dead? Read 1 Corinthians 15:23-26. What do these verses tell us about how the cosmic conflict ends? Is there any connection in these verses between what Paul says and the concept of the millennium in Revelation 20? Why does the millennium matter? What does it tell us about God? (Thursday's lesson)
8. How is the cosmic conflict played out within the church? Consider the universal church, the church at the denominational level and the local church. What kind of issues play out at each level that each of us should be concerned about? How can we work for healing and unity in the church when people don't agree on things we consider crucial points of belief and practice? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: Take Adam and Eve. Here is their first offense, and they have to leave their Garden home. Why couldn't God have been as Jesus described we ought to be, forgiving "seventy times seven?" Why couldn't He have just said, "Well, you've made one mistake. That's your first. We'll overlook that."

Graham: If sin were merely breaking the rules, if sin were merely a legal matter, He could have forgiven and let it go. But *sin changes people*. In fact, I'd want to turn that around and say, I believe He forgave them. Like the father of the prodigal son—he forgave his son even as he left home. He regarded him with forgiveness as he wallowed in the pigpen. But forgiveness does no good unless you respond. I mean, forgiveness *doesn't heal the damage done*. The problem there was not that God was unforgiving, but that having sinned, we were changed. And what was needed was not so much forgiveness as healing the damage done. I would say God forgave Adam and Eve! Of course He did.

Lou: We're back to that crucial point that you made rather early on in our series; it matters how we understand sin, the problem.

Graham: That's the thing. What went wrong?

Lou: What was wrong?

Graham: Not a legal problem—a real problem.

Lou: A real problem that needs to have healing and not just some kind of legal adjustment.

Graham: That's it exactly. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #20 with Lou Venden, "At Peace With Our Heavenly Father" 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/20MMCAG>

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.

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 glory of His presence.

When God said that no one could see His face and live, He did not mean that He would execute anyone He caught looking. To man in his present sinful state, the unveiled glory of God would be a consuming fire.

How, then, could God save sinners? How could He come close enough to win them back from their rebellion?

A distant offer of forgiveness would not repair the damage done. How could God make clear the truth about Himself, that man might come to love Him once again and so be healed?

God's answer was to send His son in human form.

Though He was Himself the very "radiance of the glory of God" (Hebrews 1:3, Phillips), Jesus "emptied Himself, . . . being born in the likeness of men." Philippians 2:7, R.S.V. He veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity that men might come to know God without being consumed.

When Adam and Eve first turned their backs on truth, they showed more faith in the miracle-working serpent than in the One who had given them life. How could God secure their allegiance once again? Love and faith are not produced by force. Only by love can love be won.

By the life that He lived and the death that He died, Jesus revealed so much of the kindness and patience of God that some are led thereby to repentance. See Romans 2:4. "We love Him, because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19.

No force. Just truth and love.

The universe was watching when God forgave Adam and Eve and granted them time to be restored. God had said in the garden, "In the day that you eat of it you shall die."

"You will not die," contradicted the serpent. "It is perfectly safe, in fact highly beneficial, to eat the fruit of this tree. God has lied to you and is unworthy of your trust and worship."

Had God permitted Adam and Eve to reap the immediate and perfectly legal consequences of their rebellion, the truth of His own words would have been clearly demonstrated, and Satan's falsehood would have been unquestionably exposed.

But "the Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9.

Instead of immediate death, He offered another chance for eternal life. Graciously He preserved the life of the sinner that he might have opportunity to understand the nature of the deception and turn once again toward the truth.

What a risk God ran of being misunderstood! {Maxwell, A. Graham. *You Can Trust the Bible; why, after many translations, it is still the word of God*, 68-71. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1967}

Lou: You mentioned as a reference, Ephesians 3:9, 10. Now this takes us to another subject here. But in Ephesians 3 are those words, "that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might be made manifest." This questioner would like you to elaborate on how you're using the word *church* here. Are you talking about a denomination—church as an official organization?

Graham: Ah, that's a fair question. It reminds me of our discussion last time, about all being in the family. Church has many meanings, doesn't it? Like this building is church, or the organization is church. "Does the church permit thus and so", we say. And then we have the interesting custom of speaking of Sabbath school and church, or Sunday school and church. Church is the 11 o'clock hour. I mean, church has many meanings. What would it mean here? We would have to go back to the original word. And the original word suggests *those who respond* to God's invitation. It's almost like *congregation*; we gather together. Or *synagogue*; they gather together. These are all God's people everywhere, who respond to the invitation

and at least profess they are His friends. And God works through these people. Now, He works and reveals Himself through His treatment of everybody. But through certain people, like Abraham, and hence his descendants, God has especially worked. And they call it the *church in the wilderness*. Paul was a member of this church. And Jeremiah was a member of this church. We can all be members of this group of individuals who say “yes” to God, who respond to His call. We still need lots of work, lots of discipline, lots of correction, lots of healing. But at the same time, we have the privilege of joining with Him in spreading this good news as to what He is like. And so God, through His church, His treatment of the church, through the cooperation of the church (which is a great privilege), has revealed His purposes and plans.

Now, this isn’t any “denomination,” that’s for sure.

Lou: Is this what you’re talking about then, when you talk about being witnesses? And Jesus says, “Ye are my witnesses.”

Graham: Those would all be members of the church, that’s for sure; the church of those who have come to trust in God again. And they enjoy the unity that is inherent in this trust, in Ephesians 4. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #2 with Lou Venden, “What Went Wrong in God’s Universe?” 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/2MMCAG>

It is the mission of the Christian church to help produce such people. In his letter to the believers in Ephesus, Paul explains Christ’s purpose in establishing his church: “He appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God’s people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ [a symbol for the Christian church]. And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ’s full stature. Then we shall no longer be children, carried by the waves and blown about by every shifting wind of the teaching of deceitful men, who lead others into error by the tricks they invent. Instead, by speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ, who is the head” (Ephesians 4:11–15, GNT).

There is no closer unity than this oneness that is inherent in our faith. Growing up together in love and admiration for the same Christ and the same God, we are bound together by the very truth that sets us free! God’s true church is made up of individuals who in the highest sense of freedom choose to band together for mutual encouragement and for greater efficiency in

spreading the gospel to all the world. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 142-143. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-13>

Is it not significant to note that perhaps the greatest distress that came to Job came from the bad theology of his well-meaning, but mistaken friends? Could it come this way in the last days? Caring theologians, who did not know God but had a very legal view of things, caused Job great distress. But he would not be deceived, even by them.

In the last days, our experience will be very much like that of Job. If we do not have the larger, whole Bible, all sixty-six books, great controversy, universe-wide understanding of God and the great controversy and the plan of salvation, we will be no help to ourselves.

We will be no help to anyone else. We will be very vulnerable when Satan seeks to deceive us that God is an arbitrary, vengeful Deity. It seems to me that a great deal of current Christian theology is preoccupied with our legal standing with our God. Is that why God still waits and waits until we grow up into a much larger understanding of the truth? For without that larger understanding of the truth, we will never survive the time of trouble. So Paul says, "Put on the whole armor that God has supplied; and particularly the armor of the truth." Look at the last verse on the sheet, Ephesians 6:11-14:

Put on all the armor which God provides, so that you may be able to stand firm [as Job did], against the devices of the devil. For our fight is not against human foes, but against cosmic powers [you know what the Greek word is—*cosmocrats*. Not democrats and aristocrats, but cosmocrats, rulers of the cosmos, cosmic powers. We know who they are], against the authorities and potentates of this dark world, against the superhuman forces of evil in the heavens [where the war began, remember]. Therefore, take up God's armor; then you will be able to stand your ground when things are at their worst, to complete every task and still to stand. Stand firm, I say. Fasten on the belt of truth. . . . (NEB)

We know what that truth is: the truth, the good news about our God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #18, "God Waits For His Children to Grow Up" 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/18MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion.

{DA 758.3}

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power.

{DA 759.1}

It was God's purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God's principles. Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe. {DA 759.2}

Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man's uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all. {DA 759.3}