

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Second Quarter 2016: *The Book of Matthew*
Lesson 12 “Jesus’ Last Days”

Read for this week’s study

Matthew 26:1–16; Luke 12:48; Matthew 26:17–19; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Matthew 26:36–46;
Matthew 26:51–75.

Memory Text

“This very night you will all fall away on account of me . . .” (Matthew 26:31, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Beautiful Work
- III. The New Covenant
- IV. Gethsemane
- V. Judas Sells His Soul
- VI. Peter’s Denial
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. What is the role of freedom in the larger picture of Christ’s final events on earth? How did Jesus exercise His own freedom in the events surrounding the cross? How does the cross affect human freedom? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Matthew 26:1-16. What was the significance of Mary’s expensive gift, and what does it tell us about Jesus? What does it tell us about the kind of human response that pleases God? If you find it personally difficult to respond to the love of God, what should you do? Does it matter that women seem to have treated Jesus better than men during much of His ministry? What is it about women that makes them more open to truth? Using our own free will, what beautiful gift can we perform for God today? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Matthew 26:17-19. What is significant about the fact that these events occurred at the time of Passover? Read Matthew 26:26-29. What is Jesus saying to His disciples? Do His words have special meaning for us today? What does this say about the kind of intimacy He plans to have with us? Why is the human race singled out for such special attention? (Monday’s lesson)

4. Read Matthew 26:36-46. Why do you think the Gethsemane experience was so difficult for Jesus? What does His outpouring of emotion tell us about God? How has the truth about God made you a better person? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Read John 6:70 and Luke 22:3. How do these texts help explain the actions of Judas? Read Matthew 26:47-50 and 27:1-10. What lessons are there for us in the story of Judas? Do you recognize any aspects of Judas in yourself? What should one do about that? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. Read Matthew 26:51-75. Why so you think Peter denied Jesus? Luke adds an additional feature to Peter's anguish (Luke 22:61). What does Jesus' painful stare on this occasion tell us about God? (Thursday's lesson)
7. According to C. S. Lewis, every story of conversion is the story of a blessed defeat. What do you think that means? Have you experienced such a "defeat" with God? Who or what is defeated and who or what is the winner? (Friday's lesson)
8. In the story of Gethsemane, Jesus asks that the "cup" He is about to drink pass from Him, but only if it is possible. In what sense was it impossible? Why was the death of Jesus absolutely essential? Couldn't there have been some other way of solving the problem of sin? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

As the apostle Paul explains, law was added because of wrongdoing and transgression. (See Galatians 3:19) Actually, what God wants most for his children—peace, love, happiness and trusting friendship—cannot be produced by legislation, much less by force or fear. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord. (Zechariah 3:4) Only by the way the Spirit works—the Spirit of love and truth—can people be persuaded of their own free will to give God what he wants.

You can force people to be your servants. But you cannot compel them to be your friends. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 22-23. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter2.html>

No doubt there are many among us who offer an obedience that misrepresents our God. But at its heart the Adventist Church espouses this forthright declaration of Ellen White:

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. . . . True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs

from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God.

I, for example, choose not to drink or smoke. But this is not only because of some Scriptural command, though with my confidence in the trustworthiness of that Book, that would be reason enough for a start. But in this scientific age, the evidence is sufficient to convince me of my own free will to forgo these hazardous indulgences.

Someday we could stand in God's presence and reverently say, "God, we would do all these things whether You asked us to or not—just because they make good sense, because in themselves they are right."

And the Father might reply, "At last you are fully free. You have learned the truth, and the truth has set you free." {Maxwell, A. Graham. *I Want to be Free*, 35-36. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1970}

Think of the story of Simon, the leper healed by Jesus. He invited Jesus to a dinner at his house. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were also invited. Luke says that Mary was known for living an immoral life in the town. Some understand that this is the same woman taken in adultery. You remember during the feast, this woman anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume.

She tried to keep it private, but forgot that the fragrance would fill the air. It became public. Simon said "within himself", the record says, "If Jesus were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman this is that is touching him. He would know what kind of sinful life she lives." Jesus spoke up and said, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Speak on," he said. And Jesus told the story of the two debtors. Simon realized that Jesus knew his innermost thoughts—which meant that Jesus knew what a sinner he had been! Simon held his breath to see if Jesus would expose him before the crowd. Surely, self-righteous Simon deserved to be exposed. Jesus handled it privately. He maintained Simon's dignity and reputation with his associates. He did not expose him and meanwhile he graciously accepted Mary's impulsive act. Think what these stories tell us about our God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #13, "How God Treats His Erring Children" recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/13MMCAG>*

We should have come earlier, though—to Gethsemane. For he began this awesome experience of demonstrating the truth about God's gracious but awful warning, that the wages of sin is death. We should have come to Gethsemane. And there Jesus fell to the ground dying. The

angels were watching. Was God killing his Son in the Garden of Gethsemane, or did Jesus feel his unity with his Father breaking up? He began to feel the awesome loneliness of being given up. Had Jesus been left in the Garden of Gethsemane, and had died there, could you say that the Father had killed the Son? Now had he been a mere creature you wouldn't know; but the angels knew who Jesus was. They knew that he was God. And they knew the meaning of his words. I should have included the verse in John 10:18. Jesus said, "No one takes my life from me. No one can. I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up." The angels knew that was the truth. And if Jesus died it was not because his Father had killed him. The Father was giving him up and both of them suffered and the Father was crying, "How can I give you up?" The Son who had assumed humanity was the One who died.

And so two questions were answered in Gethsemane: Is death the result of sin? Indeed it is. Is it because God kills his wayward children? He did not lay a hand on His Son. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, "The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence" recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>*

Lou: There's another phrase in here that often raises questions. I've wondered about this myself. When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," what are we really praying? Does that imply, "God, be careful; please don't get me into temptation?" Would God really want to do that?

Graham: One thing that helps is the word "temptation" means trial or testing. Some versions have, "Lead us not into hard testing." The idea that God would tempt is unthinkable, as our Heavenly Father. Remember James deals with this, when we're tempted, don't even blame the devil. He says, "You are led away by your own lusts and enticements." Certainly don't blame God. He wouldn't do any such thing. So "Lead us not into temptation" cannot mean, "Please, don't you tempt us." But "Lead us not into testing." Jesus prayed that in Gethsemane. He said, "Remove this cup from me, if possible." I don't think we should pray, "Lord, I'm ready for it. Bring on the trials; I feel very strong today." I believe we should say, "Lord, in all humility, I mean bring me not into trial; nevertheless, Thy will be done."

I think, "Lead us not into testing" must be coupled with, "Nevertheless, Thy will be done." Jesus did it in Gethsemane, and we do it in the Lord's Prayer. You know, the Lord's Prayer and the prayer in Gethsemane are very similar in a number of respects. "Lead us not into testing. Remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, Thy will be done." So I think the prayer in Gethsemane helps us to understand the Lord's Prayer. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15 with Lou Venden, "Talking To God As A Friend" recorded May,

1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>*

Recommended Listening:

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

Faith, Righteousness and Salvation #2 “Why Did Jesus Have To Die?” is available at: <http://pkp.cc/3MMFRS> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMFRS> (Part 2)

Recommended further study: The complete article (interview) written for The Exchange in 1999 [Why Did Jesus Have to Die \(PDF\)](#)

Further Study with Ellen White

God’s promise is, “Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13. {SC 43.1}

The whole heart must be yielded to God, or the change can never be wrought in us by which we are to be restored to His likeness. By nature we are alienated from God. The Holy Spirit describes our condition in such words as these: “Dead in trespasses and sins;” “the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint;” “no soundness in it.” We are held fast in the snare of Satan, “taken captive by him at his will.” Ephesians 2:1; Isaiah 1:5, 6; 2 Timothy 2:26. God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him. {SC 43.2}

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}

Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when shepherds listened to the angels’ song. Humanity is still as much the object of heaven’s solicitude as when common men of common occupations met angels at noonday, and talked with the heavenly messengers in the vineyards and the fields. To us in the common walks of life, heaven may be very near. Angels from the courts above will attend the steps of those who come and go at God’s command. {DA 48.4}

Before Christ’s first advent, the sin of refusing to conform to God’s law had become widespread. Apparently Satan’s power was growing; his warfare against heaven was becoming

more and more determined. A crisis had been reached. With an intense interest God's movements were watched by the heavenly angels. Would He come forth from His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity? Would He send fire or flood to destroy them? All heaven waited the bidding of their Commander to pour out the vials of wrath upon a rebellious world. One word from Him, one sign, and the world would have been destroyed. The worlds unfallen would have said, "Amen. Thou art righteous, O God, because Thou hast exterminated rebellion." {RC 58.4}

But "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God might have sent His Son to condemn, but He sent Him to save. Christ came as a Redeemer. No words can describe the effect of this movement on the heavenly angels. With wonder and admiration they could only exclaim, "Herein is love!" {RC 58.5}

Christ entered upon His mission of mercy, and from the manger to the cross was beset by the enemy. Satan contested every inch of ground, exerting his utmost power to overcome Him. Like a tempest temptation after temptation beat upon Him. But the more mercilessly they fell, the more firmly did the Son of God cling to the hand of His Father, and press on in the bloodstained path. {RC 58.6}

The severity of the conflict through which Christ passed was proportionate to the vastness of the interests involved in His success or failure. . . . Satan sought to overthrow Christ, in order that he himself might continue to reign in this world as supreme....The Father, the Son, and Lucifer have been revealed in their true relation to one another. God has given unmistakable evidence of His justice and His love.—*Signs of the Times*, Aug. 27, 1902. {RC 58.7}

Up to the time of Christ's first advent, men worshiped cruel, despotic gods. Even the Jewish mind was reached through fear and not love. Christ's mission on the earth was to reveal to men that God was not a despot but a heavenly Father, full of love and mercy for His children.—MS 132, 1902. {1MCP 183.1}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life. {5T 738.4}

The law of love is the foundation of God's government, and the service of love the only service acceptable to Heaven. God has granted freedom of will to all, endowed men with capacity to appreciate His character, and therefore with ability to love Him and to choose His service. So long as created beings worshiped God they were in harmony throughout the universe. While love to God was supreme, love to others abounded. As there was no transgression of the law,

which is the transcript of God's character, no note of discord jarred the celestial harmonies. {TMK 366.2}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {TMK 366.4}

Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. {DA 568.3}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour. {COL 419.6}

The work of Christ is to redeem, to restore, to seek and to save that which was lost. If we are connected with Christ, we also are partakers of the divine nature and are to be laborers together with God. We are to bind up the bruised and wounded soul; and if a brother or a sister has erred, we are not to join with the enemy in destroying and ruining, but to work with Christ to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. {HP 291.2}

Let us not denounce, condemn, and destroy as though we were faultless. It is the work of Christ to mend, to heal, to restore. God is love. . . . He . . . gives Satan no occasion for triumphing by making the worst appear or by exposing our weaknesses to our enemies. {HP 291.3}

In love He comes to reveal the Father, to reconcile man to God, to make him a new creature renewed after the image of Him who created him. {1SM 321.3}

The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves—it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. With it come serenity and composure. It implants in the soul, joy that nothing earthly can destroy,—joy in the Holy Spirit,—health-giving, life-giving joy. {MH 115.3}

Our Saviour's words, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills. Though men have brought suffering upon themselves by their own wrongdoing, He regards them with pity. In Him they may find help. He will do great things for those who trust in Him. {MH 115.4}