

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2016: *The Book of Job*

Lesson 2 “The Great Controversy”

Read for this week’s study

Job 1:1–5; Job 1:6–12; Zechariah 3:2; Matthew 4:1; Ezekiel 28:12–16; Romans 3:26; Hebrews 2:14.

Memory Text

“And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” (Zechariah 3:2).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Little Heaven on Earth
- III. Cosmic Conflict
- IV. The Conflict on Earth
- V. Job as a Microcosm
- VI. Answers at the Cross
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The great controversy theme forms a template that can help us better understand ‘the total message’ of the Bible, especially the plan of salvation. Though the theme is much more apparent in the New Testament, it is found in the Old Testament, too. And perhaps nowhere in the Old Testament are we given a clearer glimpse of Satan and this conflict, and how they can powerfully affect life here, than in the book of Job. This week we’ll look at the broader reality behind this immediate reality that’s the main focus of Job.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. “There’s so much to explore in these few verses [1:6-12]. They reveal aspects of our universe that all our space telescopes don’t detect and that human science doesn’t even begin to fathom. What’s fascinating, though, is that they also reveal a cosmic conflict.” (Monday’s lesson)
3. What is the significance of the fact that God allows Satan’s challenge? Notice it is God who brings Job’s name to the “investigative judgment” because He is delighted with Job and “knows” the outcome of the case and that Job will be vindicated. Thus God is not “testing” Job to see what the outcome will be. Satan is presented as a cynical enemy who attacks the character of Job—and by association he attacks God.

4. God's way of dealing with this accusation and attack on His and Job's character is crucial to the outcome of the whole story. What is the significance of the fact that God runs his universe on the basis of evidence, allowing all created beings to make up their own minds? Why doesn't he settle the matter with a sovereign pronouncement?
5. If God's sovereignty is questioned in the process of the cosmic conflict, He must use other means to deal with the issue. His sovereignty or power cannot settle the matter.
6. "The point is that by the time Satan is introduced in [the book of] Job, his fall was past, and the controversy it had started was well under way." (Wednesday's lesson)
7. The way we define the issues in this cosmic controversy, will determine the solutions we believe bring resolution. How do different models vary in their understanding of what the real issues are? What is Satan implying with his accusation? Can God's government be based on love?
8. "The book of Job says nothing about how Satan's rebellion started. Also, it says nothing about how Satan is ultimately defeated in the great controversy. In fact, despite his major role in all that follows in the book—after appearing only twice in Job (Job 1:6–12, 2:1–7)—Satan does not come into view again. He simply vanishes, even though the destruction that he caused remains. The rest of the book doesn't even mention him; instead, almost all that follows in the book is about God, not Satan. And that makes sense because, in the end, the book of Job is about God and what He is really like." (Thursday's lesson)
9. What is the significance of the fact that Satan does not appear after 2:7? Why is it that Job's friends never attribute the evil that happens to the actions of Satan?
10. "Nevertheless, the Bible doesn't leave us without answers to the question about the defeat of Satan in the great controversy. And central to that defeat is the death of Jesus on the cross." (Thursday's lesson)
11. Many of the prevalent and popular explanations of what happened on the cross do not take into consideration the cosmic conflict. Why? Job's friends are going to argue that what happened to him is God's retribution. The most popular interpretation of Jesus' death throughout the middle ages was a form of God's retribution meted out on Jesus (on our behalf)!
12. Why and how does this skew the real issues that need to be answered if the character of God is to be ultimately vindicated and sin eradicated?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The scene at the very beginning is crucial for the reading of Job. If a person started out in the middle, I don't know how he could carry on, although there are some very exciting statements in there. But the meaning is very much dependent on chapters 1 & 2. This good man; God said he was perfect. He also said, "He will never let me down." We have the picture of the Heavenly Council meeting. If Moses wrote this, the great controversy is portrayed page one in the Bible. Isn't the conflict right there in Genesis when Satan lied about God and accused God of lying to Adam and Eve? Either way, Genesis or Job, the Bible begins with the great controversy over the trustworthiness of God. Who is on Job's side, by the way? God speaks with pride of His friend Job and says to Satan, "Have you considered my friend Job?" And Satan said, "Well, you know why he serves you. He's got that key text that if he pays his tithes faithfully, you'll open the windows of Heaven and reward him. Don't reward him one time, and he'll quit paying his tithes. In fact, he'll curse you, and he'll trust you no longer." God said, "You can take away all that he has, and he won't give up his friendship with me." And you remember what happened.

And so at the next meeting, God said, "Have you considered my servant Job, a wonderful man? You took away everything that he has, but he didn't sin with his lips, and he still trusts me." And Satan said, "Well, that's because you've protected him so much. You let me get at him personally. I'll break him down." And God said, "You can do everything you like to him short of taking his life, and he will not let me down."

Satan went out to do his work. And Job lost everything. Was it because he lacked faith that he got into so much trouble? I thought if you paid your tithe faithfully and worshipped regularly, and did all that you should, the locusts would go through your neighbor's field, but not yours. This is no bedtime story; the book of Job. All the good things that should have happened didn't. It was all reversed, and it made no sense, because he used to be prosperous, he used to be healthy, and had a wonderful family. He even offered prayers for his children lest they sin and be unaware of it. He was that concerned about his family. There was no stone he left unturned in order to do every good thing he knew he should. And yet he lost everything. He even lost his health. And he sat down on, do you have 'a rubbish heap' or 'a dung heap'? Anyway, a very unpleasant place, and he tore his clothes and he threw ashes on himself, and he was covered with boils. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Esther & Job, recorded March, 1982, 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 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/25MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/26MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

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).

Someday soon, before Christ returns, Satan will make a last, desperate attempt to win us all to his side. He will appear as an angel of light—the Light Bearer again; Lucifer, the Morning Star (see 2 Corinthians 11:14). He will even proclaim himself to be God. Just as he tried to persuade Christ to worship him in the wilderness of temptation, so he will seek to win our worship now.

The Bible predicts that his efforts will seem to be completely successful. The whole world will worship him—except for a few, “the remnant” (KJV), who will not be deceived. On the contrary, they will take their stand with the loyal angels and maintain their trust in God (see Revelation 12:17; 13:1–8; 14:12). {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>

So first this evening, let us consider again what has gone wrong, because I believe the way we understand what went wrong helps us to understand the methods God has used to set things right. And particularly, then, it helps us to understand why Jesus had to die.

Our God has been accused, specifically, of being arbitrary, and exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. God sent his Son to reveal the truth about these matters. Why was it not enough for Jesus to come and live among us as he did and tell us the truth about his Father and then demonstrate by his gracious treatment of the worst of sinners that God, indeed, is not the kind of Person his enemies have made him out to be?

Of course, the way he lived and the way he treated people is vital evidence. And we will spend much time on it later, particularly on the evening entitled “How God Treats His Erring Children.”

But remember that the most serious charge leveled against our God is that God has lied to us. He lied when he said that sin results in death. Worse than that, Satan has turned God’s gracious warning to our first parents in the Garden of Eden into a terrifying threat. He pictures God as saying to Adam and Eve, “Either you obey me, or I’ll kill you!” And think of the baleful effect that perversion of the truth about our God has had on the human race. Think how it has poisoned people’s attitude toward God and their practice of religion. Think of picturing our gracious God as saying, “You either love and obey me, or I’ll torture and execute you in my righteous wrath.” How could this satanic view of God win such wide acceptance as it has? And it is still very widely believed.

For thousands of years, men have sacrificed even their own children to win the favor of their offended gods. Even in the Christian world it is suggested, even believed, that if it were not for

Christ's appeasement (sometimes called propitiation) of his Father's wrath, we would long before now have been destroyed. And were it not for Christ's constant pleading with the Father, God could not find it in his own heart to forgive and heal his children.

Who could have thought up such perversion? But now, as you know the sixty-six books, does anything need to be done to persuade God to love his children? The testimony of all sixty-six books is that God has always loved even his most wayward child. That is what is summed up in John 3:16, "God so loved the world. . . ." Not just his good children, but all his children, both good and bad.

And those serious words to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden were no threat. Those words were a gracious warning—because sin actually results in death. Sin so changes the sinner that a natural consequence of this condition is death. Cut off by his own rebellious choice from the source of life, the sinner will die. Now out of harmony with God by his own rebellious rejection, the sinner is so changed that even the life-giving glory of our God becomes a consuming fire. How can this best be clarified? Not by claims, but by evidence and demonstration.

One choice that God had was to allow Adam and Eve to die. And he could have said to the universe, "Who is telling the truth? I said sinners would die! It is the devil who has lied to you."

Or going back even further, God could have left Satan and his followers to reap the natural results of their sin and they would have perished. And surely then there would have been no question about the truthfulness of God's warning. Why didn't God take those—it would seem—easy choices? He could have saved all the painful history since that time. Of course, had the universe watched Satan and his followers die, they had never seen death before, so there was the hazard that they would assume that God had executed his children who did not please him. Then there would be the danger that the angels would serve God from fear, and the obedience that springs from fear produces the character of a rebel. And rebelliousness is the essence of sin.

And so instead of God taking that easy way, not wanting the obedience and love that springs from fear, totally unacceptable to so gracious a God as we know him to be, and having such dire consequences; instead of taking those choices, God sent his Son in human form.

And He died the death that is the natural result of sin. And the universe watched to see how God was involved in the death of the wicked. {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>

Is there a verse in the Bible that says that when Jesus died, he was given up? Romans 4:25 says Christ was given up for our transgressions. And many versions, with their reformation influence; translate this “Christ was put to death.” There is nothing in there about being put to death; it says he was given up. To tie that in with the issue in the great controversy, God gave up his Son as if he were a sinner, just as he will give us up, if we are real sinners at the end. Because you can’t force people to trust you, in a free universe what can you do but give people up? When Jesus was given up, yes, he died.

So I believe there were three questions answered by Gethsemane and the cross. One: who is right, God or the devil? Is God a liar when he says sin results in death? The devil says, “Yes, God has lied to you.” . . .

“You will not die” is the teaching of the devil. God says, “You *will* die. But it is not torture and execution at my hands.”

The devil developed the whole doctrine of hell to turn the universe against God. And God says that is not true. And I say, “Well, how do I know how the wicked are going to die?” He says, “Only one person has ever died the death as a result of sin. It’s only happened once in all eternity. I died that death. I wouldn’t ask any of you to prove the truthfulness of my word. This is the meaning of substitutionary death.”

Yes, he died in our place, but not for legal reasons. He died because he wouldn’t think of asking anybody else to go through that painful experience to demonstrate the truth. Besides, our death wouldn’t have answered it anyway, because if our dying would have answered the question, then he might as well have let Lucifer die in the beginning.

But you remember the explanation. Had he left Lucifer to die, the universe would have misunderstood and assumed God had put him to death. So only by God coming; he said, “No one takes my life from me. Nobody can kill me. I’m going through this myself. I have arranged this with my Father.” And the universe looking on said the Father isn’t killing the Son; God isn’t killing God. And it was clear enough to them that they could say, “Our questions are answered.” One—sin does result in death. Two—it is not torture and execution at the hands of our gracious God.

Only one thing left. “God, why were you so concerned that we understand this?” God says, “Because if you serve me from fear, it will turn you into rebels—holy rebels.” He says, “Come to Calvary.” On Calvary, Jesus was tortured to death. By whom? The most devout, blueprinting Adventists the world has ever known. Absolutely dedicated to God, the scriptures, creation, Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, you name it. Jesus said you even strain gnats out of your goat’s milk—real health reformers. You couldn’t fault them for a thing. You couldn’t have disfellowshipped one of the people who crucified Christ. Their lives were apparently without blemish.

But they hated him; they hated his picture of God. They killed him to silence his unbiblical heresy. And the angels looking on said, “We thought, by sending your Son to Palestine, you did that to get a good running start with people who already agreed with you. We didn’t realize you sent him there to prove this costly point—that if we obey you for the wrong reason, because we don’t really know you, we could turn into your worst enemies in the middle of our Sabbath keeping and our tithe-paying and our health-reforming.” And that’s why I think the biggest mistake the Adventist church could make in these last days is to have one tremendous revival in reformation, get out the blueprint, straighten out our lives, without spending much more time on the picture of God. Because if we do the right things for the wrong reason, we’ll do what some of the Jews did, and become his enemies.

So I believe the cross was the only way to answer the questions. Without answers to the questions, there would be no peace, no freedom, no security throughout the universe. So it was for these specific reasons. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Questions People Are Asking About the Plan of Salvation, recorded April, 1983, Redlands, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMQUESTP> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMQUESTP> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

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}

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. {Ed 17.2}

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}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan’s control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

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}

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 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}

The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side, as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness, seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression. {1SM 235.1}

When one surrenders to Christ, the mind is brought under the control of the law; but it is the royal law, which proclaims liberty to every captive. By becoming one with Christ, man is made free. Subjection to the will of Christ means restoration to perfect manhood. {MH 131.1}

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe. {DA 764.2}

The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Romans 13:10. {GC 467.1}

The same spirit that prompted rebellion in heaven still inspires rebellion on earth. Satan has continued with men the same policy which he pursued with the angels. {GC 500.1}

By the same misrepresentation of the character of God as he had practiced in heaven, causing Him to be regarded as severe and tyrannical, Satan induced man to sin. And having succeeded

thus far, he declared that God's unjust restrictions had led to man's fall, as they had led to his own rebellion. {GC 500.2}

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 (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 42, 43). {LHU 19.6}