

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2017: “Feed My Sheep”: 1 and 2 Peter

#### Lesson 2 “An Inheritance Incorruptible”

#### Read for this week’s study

1 Peter 1:1, 2; John 3:16; Ezekiel 33:11; 1 Peter 1:3–21; Leviticus 11:44, 45; 1 Peter 1:22–25.

#### Memory Text

“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart” (1 Peter 1:22, NIV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. To the Exiles
- III. Elected
- IV. Key Themes
- V. Living the Life of Salvation
- VI. Love One Another
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. As we read Peter, the study guide suggests it would be good to understand the historical context of his letter. What was he saying, and why? “It would be good to know who the intended audience was. Perhaps even more important, it would be good to know what the precise reason for the writing was. What was the particular issue (if any) that the author wanted to address?” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Why are these questions important to ask? Why can’t we start with the question: What message can we take from 1 Peter today? Can you give some examples of how a wrong question almost guarantees a wrong answer?
3. Is there any significance in the fact that the Holy Spirit did not permit the Apostle Paul to minister in the very region to which the Apostle Peter now writes (1 Peter 1:1; Acts 16:7; 2:9)? Is it possible that some people will receive “the truth” from one person, but would have a hard time receiving it from someone else? Do you see any dangers in this (1 Corinthians 1:12)?

4. “Whether writing to specifically Jewish or a Gentile believers, Peter was sure about one thing: they were ‘elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father’” (1 Peter 1:2). (Monday’s lesson)
5. What is the meaning and significance of this election? How do we protect against reading centuries of Christian interpretation into the text?
6. God’s election is not based on anything we have done (because we were not even on the scene). Nor it is based on anything that God knew that we would be or do. It is based wholly on His grace and love. “Foreknowledge” in the Bible does not mean that God simply knew ahead of time what we would believe and on that basis He chose us. In the Bible, *to foreknow* means “to set one’s love on a person or group of persons in a personal way.” See Amos 3:2 – “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” (See also Psalm 1:6; Matthew 7:23; John 10:14.27; 1 Corinthians 8:3).
7. “Christians, Peter begins (1 Peter 1:3; *see also* John 3:7), have been born anew. Their whole life has been transformed by Jesus’ resurrection and the extraordinary inheritance that awaits Christians in heaven (1 Peter 1:3, 4). [...] And the outcome of their faith in Him is salvation and the promise of ‘an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you’ (1 Peter 1:4, NKJV).” (Tuesday’s lesson)
8. How has this “heavenly inheritance” been interpreted throughout the centuries? Is that a Biblical model, or a model based on Greek dualism? What is the meaning of this “incorruptible inheritance that is kept for Christians in heaven?” (v. 4)
9. Notice that Peter does not address these people in terms of their ancestry, their moral background, their social status, their wealth or poverty, shared oppression or complaint. All those things are part of the old structures. But because of what the Messiah did on the cross and in His resurrection, Peter is sketching a new identity. This new life which God created at Easter isn’t just about individuals being transformed. Through that great action, God has created a whole new world. At the moment it is being kept safe, out of sight, behind an invisible curtain which separates our world (=earth) from God’s world (=heaven). But one day the curtain will be drawn back and then the “incorruptible inheritance” will be merged with our earthly reality, transforming it and soaking it with God’s presence, love and mercy (1:4).
10. Part of the Lessons for Wednesday and Thursday (vss. 13-25) deal with the consequences of this: “The word *therefore*, which begins 1 Peter 1:13, NKJV, shows that what Peter will say next grows out of [...] the grace of God and the hope that Christians have in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3–12). As a result of this grace and hope, Peter urges his readers to ‘gird up the loins of your mind’ (1 Peter 1:13).” (Wednesday’s lesson)
11. How do we live the life of salvation in our present reality? What does “the girding up the loins of your mind” mean in practice (see the memory text: 1:22)? What kind of

re-thinking do we need to do in our time and place? What should the outcome of all this be?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Does predestination bother any of you? That was our Sabbath School lesson this week. Was it cleared up thoroughly, there? Shall we look, just in passing, very quickly? Romans 8:29:

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son [we're predestined then], and those whom he predestined [verse 30], he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Look at chapter 9, about the potter and the clay. Out of one lump, he can take some clay and make vessels made for destruction; and out the same lump he can make vessels for salvation. Does that cancel it all out? Could I suggest this very quickly? In Romans 8:29: "those whom He foreknew He predestined. . ." How many does he foreknow? Everybody. So how many are predestined? All. And all who are predestined, he calls. How many does he call? All. And those whom he calls, he justifies. How many? And those whom he justifies, he glorifies. How many does he glorify? Well, we have no need to worry! He's going to justify and glorify everybody! Everybody! Saints and sinners alike? Then no one will be lost? It doesn't work. So we start back through. How many does he glorify? Only those that he justifies. How many does he justify? Only those whom he calls. But he calls everybody. Then there's something wrong. Because if you start in from both ends, you don't meet in the middle. So there must be some word misunderstood in there; and I wouldn't have chosen this so late, except that it fits in with all the purpose of our study. Those whom he foreknew. What does it mean in the Bible to know?

"Thee only have I known." "Depart from Me. I never knew you." I thought he knew everybody. In the Bible, to know means to know as a friend. It even means to know with love and intimacy. Hence, "Adam knew Eve his wife" and they had a baby. It isn't that babies come from being introduced. And you remember in Kings, when David had that extraordinary hot water bottle, and it says that he never knew her, (1 Kings 1:4) it doesn't mean that he never learned her name. So we're very familiar with this in the Bible. To know means to know in a special way. And to foreknow means to know in a special way. Those whom God foreknew would be his friends. Then all the rest follows. Does God know who will be his friends and who will not? Read Romans 9, Jacob and Esau, and the others. He knows this.

Do you mind that God foreknows the future? Would you trust anybody else with that kind of knowledge? Would God abuse such infinite power and knowledge? Not the kind of God we worship. So I don't mind how much he knows. It makes sense. We're not predestined. "Choose

you this day.” We’re free. “Whosoever will” is made plain all through Scripture. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Romans, recorded May, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/61MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/62MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: Another statement that you made, Graham; “There’s no shortcut to faith,” struck me as very important.

You’ve talked about trust and faith. You alluded to this again tonight. But I think many of us still have the feeling that faith involves a kind of blind trust. You need faith when you don’t have enough evidence, so you just go ahead and believe. I wish you’d comment a bit more about that.

Graham: I wonder who’s given that idea such circulation. It seems to me that only the adversary would be pleased with that—that when we trust God we say, “I trust you, but I really don’t have any evidence for doing so.”

We say, “God, there’s so much evidence, I’m still studying it. The more I come to know you, the more I trust you.” One thing that has caused trouble is the use of these different words; trust is one thing, confidence is one thing, faith is another. They are all the same word in the Bible.

Lou: Some very sincere people have talked about faith as a leap in the dark. You go as far as you can on evidence, and then when you come to that cliff you just close your eyes and jump, and you hope that you land.

Graham: I think history is strewn with the wreckage of those who have been leaping in the dark. It’s a very dangerous thing to do. Now, it might be that God has asked me to do something like Abraham, which I momentarily cannot understand. But because of all the light, in full confidence in one I know very well, I move forward. I even know him well enough that he won’t be angry if I question him along the way. I hate to call that a leap in the dark. Many use this definition because they think they really are in the dark. I mean, some most distinguished theologians whose presentations are so admirable, nevertheless believe that God has never really revealed these matters to us. And we are in the dark. I admire them for taking life so seriously in the dark. But I’m not going to say my faith in God is a leap in the dark. Christ came as the light—and I say to God, “I trust you, but I’m surely in the dark. Why do you leave us in the dark all the time?” So often it’s people who don’t know what to do with the Bible. They don’t really believe in a personal God who really reveals himself. So in a way, it is this old-fashioned confidence in scripture that leads us to reject that definition, I think.

We would never say “we’re in the dark.” Look what he has paid to keep us in the light! So faith is the most enlightened, intelligent, rational decision we ever make, for which we have the

most evidence. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4 with Lou Venden, “God’s Way of Restoring Trust” recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>

If you were ever asked to explain why you obey God (assuming that you do), what answer would you give? Would you say, “I do what I do as a believer, because God has told me to and he has the power to reward and destroy.” Is that why you don’t lie and murder? Nothing wrong in those activities themselves, but it upsets God when you do that—and upsetting God is a dangerous thing to do.

This might be all right for a beginner or for a little child, but it makes God’s laws seem so arbitrary. They have no sense in themselves. That kind of obedience does not speak well and truly about our God.

Would you rather say, “I do what I do as a believer, because God has told me to, and I love him and want to please him.” Is that why you don’t steal or commit adultery? It is not that you see anything wrong in these things in themselves; it’s just that God doesn’t like it when we do that. He has been so good to us, surely we owe it to him to do the things he has asked us to do, whether they make sense or not?

Again this does not speak well of God. It might be a little improvement from obeying out of fear or desire for reward. But it still smacks of arbitrariness. It still does not speak well of God, though that is often thought to be the antidote for the first option.

Could you say this? “I do what I do because more and more I am finding it to be right and sensible to do so. How I admire and revere the one who so advised me and even commanded me in the days of my ignorance and immaturity,” hastening to add, “being still somewhat ignorant and immature, I am willing to listen to this God and to heed his commandments when he asks me to do something beyond my present understanding.” That says that God is not arbitrary, but that everything he has asked us to do makes such good sense, we should want to do it anyway. If you can say that, then truly God’s law is not a threat to your freedom, and you thank him for it.

James is thought to be the legalist among the Bible writers. But look at James 2:8, 12: “If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom.” (NIV) That is James; and even Luther didn’t understand him that way. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #12, “God’s Law is No Threat to our Freedom” 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/12MMCAG>

You see, if you're dogmatic about freedom, it means you always will respect other people's freedom. So if I'm absolutely dogmatic about freedom, you're absolutely safe. I would never intrude on your freedom. And if you have a society where everybody is absolutely, non-negotiably committed to freedom, then we're all free. And that's why you can understand Paul saying this. Now, are we that committed to freedom? Look at Galatians 5: 1, beginning, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." He's been talking about law all the way through, and he's been explaining the function of law. What brings freedom? Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." Truth about what? Well, ultimately, the truth about God, and about his government, about what he wants of us, and in Galatians, particularly, the truth about God's use of law. It is no threat to our freedom at all. Besides, if you look at the law, what's the truth about what the law requires, anyway? Is this a threat to our freedom? Look at 5:13:

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another."

One could be reading Romans here. Remember Romans 13:8, 10, he says love is the fulfilling of the law. The man who loves his neighbor has fulfilled all law. He says the same thing here in Galatians. Well, supposing then we all obeyed the law, and we all loved each other, which would mean we would never be rude, never arrogant, never insist on having our own way, and so on. Would that be a threat to our freedom? We would be really free, you see. So if we understand what the law requires, it's a guarantee of freedom. If God says, "I'll only save people who are committed to the spirit of my law, it means I'll only save people who love one another, and therefore can be trusted, and there will be peace and freedom." {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>*

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal." Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency.

So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. {DA 22.2}

This world has been visited by the Majesty of heaven, the Son of God. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Christ came to this world as the expression of the very heart and mind and nature and character of God. He was the brightness of the Father’s glory, the express image of His person. But He laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and stepped down from His high command to take the place of a servant. He was rich, but for our sake, that we might have eternal riches, He became poor. He made the world, but so completely did He empty Himself that during His ministry He declared, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.” {MM 19.1}

He came to this world and stood among the beings He had created as a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. {MM 19.2}

The gift of God to man is beyond all computation. Nothing was withheld. God would not permit it to be said that He could have done more or revealed to humanity a greater measure of love. In the gift of Christ He gave all heaven. {SD 11.4}

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God gave to human beings an unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. The gift of Christ reveals the Father’s heart. It testifies that, having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. {9T 254.1}

The creation of the worlds, the mystery of the gospel, are for one purpose, to make manifest to all created intelligences, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character. By the marvelous display of His love in giving “his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” the glory of God is revealed to lost humanity and to the intelligences of other worlds. {AG 129.3}

The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant. So surely as there never was a time when God was not, so surely there never was a moment when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest His grace to humanity. {FLB 76.4}

The fall of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent. Redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam, but an eternal purpose, suffered to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world, but for the good of all the worlds that God had created. . . . {TMK 18.2}

The change of heart by which we become children of God is in the Bible spoken of as birth. Again, it is compared to the germination of the good seed sown by the husbandman. . . . So from natural life, illustrations are drawn, to help us better to understand the mysterious truths of spiritual life. Not all the wisdom and skill of man can produce life in the smallest object in nature. It is only through the life which God Himself has imparted, that either plant or animal can live. So it is only through the life from God that spiritual life is begotten in the hearts of men. {FLB 19.2}

When truth becomes an abiding principle in the life, the soul is “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” This new birth is the result of receiving Christ as the word of God. Then by the Holy Spirit divine truths are impressed upon the heart, new conceptions are awakened, and the energies hitherto dormant are aroused to cooperate with God. . . . Christ was the revealer of truth to the world. By Him the incorruptible seed—the Word of God—was sown in the hearts of men. {FLB 19.3}

Jesus says, “Love one another, as I have loved you.” Love is not simply an impulse, a transitory emotion, dependent upon circumstances; it is a living principle, a permanent power. The soul is fed by the streams of pure love that flow from the heart of Christ, as a well-spring that never fails. O, how is the heart quickened, how are its motives ennobled, its affections deepened, by this communion! Under the education and discipline of the Holy Spirit, the children of God love one another, truly, sincerely, unaffectedly—“without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” And this because the heart is in love with Jesus. Our affection for one another springs from our common relation to God. We are one family, we love one another as He loved us. When compared with this true, sanctified, disciplined affection, the shallow courtesy of the world, the meaningless expressions of effusive friendship, are as chaff to the wheat (Letter 63, 1896). {5BC 1140.3}

To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others. . . . {5BC 1140.4}

Christ’s love is deep and earnest, flowing like an irrepressible stream to all who will accept it. There is no selfishness in His love. If this heaven-born love is an abiding principle in the heart, it

will make itself known, not only to those we hold most dear in sacred relationship, but to all with whom we come in contact. It will lead us to bestow little acts of attention, to make concessions, to perform deeds of kindness, to speak tender, true, encouraging words. It will lead us to sympathize with those whose hearts hunger for sympathy (MS 17, 1899). {5BC 1140.5}

He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God. {DA 297.1}

We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love. {DA 297.3}

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's circle the poor souls who have been deluded by his deceptions. It places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. {COL 386.2}

Wherever there is union with Christ there is love. Whatever other fruits we may bear, if love be missing, they profit nothing. Love to God and our neighbor is the very essence of our religion. No one can love Christ and not love His children. When we are united to Christ, we have the mind of Christ. Purity and love shine forth in the character, meekness and truth control the life. The very expression of the countenance is changed. {RC 104.2}

Christ abiding in the soul exerts a transforming power, and the outward aspect bears witness to the peace and joy that reign within. We drink in the love of Christ, as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted in Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the Living Vine, we shall give evidence of the fact by bearing rich clusters of living fruit. If we are connected with the Light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. {RC 104.3}

Those who are truly Christians are bound with the chain of love which links earth to heaven, which binds finite man to the infinite God. The light that shines in the face of Jesus Christ shines in the hearts of His followers, to the glory of God. {RC 104.4}