

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2018: *Stewardship: Motives of the Heart*

Lesson 3 “God or Mammon?”

Read for this week’s study

Psalm 33:6–9; Matthew 19:16–22; 1 Peter 1:18; Hebrews 2:14, 15; Exodus 9:14; Psalm 50:10.

Memory Text

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9–11, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Christ, the Creator
- III. Son of God/Son of Man
- IV. Christ, the Redeemer
- V. A Jealous God
- VI. True Ownership
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. According to this week’s lesson: “Serving God and serving money are mutually exclusive actions. It’s one or the other, God or mammon.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? What does “money” actually represent, and what can we learn from that? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Genesis 1:1, Psalm 33:6-9, Isaiah 45:11-12, Jeremiah 51:15, and John 1:3. What do these texts tell us about God’s relation to the material world? What does the created world tell us about the Creator? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Matthew 19:16-22. What do you think the man in the story was sad about? What does this story tell us about how Satan uses our love of material things to keep us distant from God? Whether we are rich or poor, how can we make sure we keep the right relationship to the things of this world? (Monday’s lesson)
4. The lesson uses a banking model to describe the human condition and what God does to remedy that condition. The human condition is described as a debt that we

owe that we cannot repay. The solution is forgiveness of that debt or the payment of a ransom. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of such a model? Notice how the following texts describe the human condition (Colossians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Peter 1:18; Hebrews 2:14-15; Galatians 3:13; Revelation 1:5). (Tuesday's lesson)

5. Read Exodus 9:14. What does God mean when He says, "There is none like me in all the earth?" What do the following texts tell us about how different God is from His creation (1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 86:8; Isaiah 55:8-9; Jeremiah 10:10; Titus 1:2)? What does the concept of a "jealous God" (Exodus 34:14) tell us about our relationship with God? Are there any positive aspects to the concept of jealousy? Can we apply such a concept to God without any of the negative baggage the word usually carries? What, if anything, is competing with God for your affections? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. According to the following verses, what does God own (Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalm 50:10; 104:16; Ezekiel 18:4; Haggai 2:8; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20)? What do these same texts tell us about how we should view the material things that we have in our possession? If it is true that we don't really own anything, what difference should that knowledge make in our attitude toward the things of this world? (Thursday's lesson)
7. Read Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:15. What does it mean that human beings were given "dominion" over the earth? How does Genesis 2:15 help to explain that? What should our attitude as Christians be toward taking care of the environment? Why take care of a world that will be destroyed in the end anyway? (Friday's lesson)
8. How can we learn to distinguish between the proper use and enjoyment of the physical things God has created and the abuse of those things? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Remember the charges developed through Scripture are that God is arbitrary; he is not respectful of the freedom of his children. He is vengeful, exacting, unforgiving, and severe; he cannot even be depended upon to tell the truth. Is that answered during creation week? What could you point to as answers? You are watching. Day one, two. Sometimes we wonder why he took so long. He could have created the world with a snap of his fingers, couldn't he? Has he always taken that long to create each of the billions and billions of worlds? Or because the controversy has begun, the charges have been laid, and a third of the angels have accepted them as true, might this be the background for God doing what he did? No one was hurrying him during creation week. With great majesty and unhurried drama, God unfolded his plan for our world. Day one: "Let there be light." Day two, three, four, five; the world is a beautiful place. God doesn't look very selfish by Thursday evening. What a beautiful place he's planned

for the people that he will permit to dwell there. And then on Friday he creates the first man and the first woman. Why do you think he made us male and female? It's caused all kinds of complications ever since, hasn't it? Why do you think he did this? It seems to me one of the most wonderful things God ever did, was to share as much of his creative power with us mere humans as he possibly could. A selfish God? Abusing his divine power and selfishly using it?

See, Satan wants to be like God, to be a creator-god. What better way could there be, than for God to create us male and female, with the amazing arrangement, that when a man and a woman come together in love, they have the power to create little people in their own image. Now, we're only creatures, we're not God, so we don't quite know how we do this, but we've been given this amazing ability. If all goes well, and wouldn't it be just like God to have it happen in an atmosphere of love? Wouldn't it be just like the devil to pervert this as much as he could? But under ideal circumstances, out of that relationship, we have the power to create little people, and they surely are in our own image unto the third and fourth generation. It's interesting to me to watch grandchildren coming along. And I see those things still there. Good ones and some other kinds too; they're still there. How amazing, that God would share his creative power with us to that extent, and the angels looking on must have been stunned. Or maybe this wasn't new. Is that the way it is everywhere? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Genesis*, recorded October, 1981, 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 1983:

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

Lou: It's part of our problem, then, that we are taking models from our legal system here and trying to apply them to God. The "substitutionary," that comes in, say more about that. The "vicarious."

Graham: Ah. He died in our stead. He died as the substitution. In a way, it's very true. I mean, either he dies or we die. However that's where the comparison ends, because if God has let you and me and all other sinners die, all it would have done is prove the truthfulness of his warning, "If you sin, you will die." And God could say to the universe, "Was I right? I said sinners would die, and look, they're dead."

But the universe would not have had answers to questions two and three that I just mentioned. When Jesus died, there was no doubt in the minds of the universe that God was not killing his Son. They were clear about that. And the death of Christ answers all those three questions. So it's not either us or him. His death was infinitely more significant than ours. But had he not died, then what else could God do but leave us to reap the consequences and we all would have died. So in a sense, yes. He died in our stead, but beyond that there's no comparison.

Lou: But not as a payoff. It's not one or the other.

Graham: It's not his death is equal to all of ours. His death is infinitely more significant than the death of every sinful man or angel who has ever lived. The death of angels and men would not have answered the questions.

Lou: What you're saying then, is that just a simple satisfaction idea doesn't encompass what's involved at all, does it?

Graham: Oh, it makes it much too small. I think it puts God in a very bad light, and it doesn't answer the questions of the great controversy.

Many folk who prefer those understandings of the plan of salvation do not understand there has been a universe-wide great controversy over the character and government of God. And do you remember at our first meeting, I brought along the evidence that even Luther, hero of the Christian world that he is, could not conceive of these larger issues because he couldn't include the book of Revelation—let alone Hebrews, James and Jude. And this has been the pattern through the years. Not many have seen the sixty-sixth book picture of a universe-wide controversy over the character and government of God. And so they have seen the death of Christ as primarily a plan just to save you and me, for which we are very grateful. It's just that the larger view makes the cross much more significant. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #8 with Lou Venden, "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>*

One view sees the plan of salvation and God's gracious provisions, such as the death of Christ on the cross, as being primarily offered to adjust our legal standing in the sight of God, because as sinners, we are guilty. And guilty as we are, justice and law demand that we be executed. And the only way to avoid being executed—and there are many, various explanations of execution; these are the various views of hell. We all have views of hell, the longer view, the medium view and the shorter view; there are many views of hell. But if God is the executioner, then we do well to be preoccupied with our legal standing. And unless we be forgiven, he will go ahead and do this to us; he must. Law and justice require it. And if he doesn't go through with this, the universe will conclude he is unjust. And if he's unjust, you wouldn't trust him, and now you're getting over into the other view, which always amuses me, that if you pursue even the legal view logically to its conclusions you wind up with the other one.

But now in the larger view, which uses all sixty-six books and has no problems with Ellen White at all, it sees sin not as a legal problem. It sees sin as a very real problem, that has had devastating consequences on us physically, mentally, spiritually, socially. Sin is a breach of trust, as Romans 14 says. Sin is treachery. Sin is what Lucifer did in the beginning, for which you could

not have called him in before church counsel. I mean, what had he done? Nothing! Except the most devastating thing that can ever be done. Nearly destroyed the universe, that's what he did. That's how bad it was. And because of this distrust, and the consequential unwillingness to listen and allow God to look after us and heal the damage done, enormous damage has been done to sinners. **We're not in legal trouble, we're in trouble. We're not in danger of being executed, we're dying. That's the difference.** And I believe it makes all the difference in the world. I would not go to a doctor who would kill his patients for not cooperating. But if I'm dying, I need a doctor. And if I go and don't cooperate, I still may die. But my understanding is, that in this larger view, this great controversy view, this sixty-six book view, we're all dying. And if God were to leave us alone, that's it.

But he hasn't. He's pursued us through the years, trying to win us back to trust. And of course, you don't expect people to trust without evidence. You don't make claims; you offer demonstrations; that's the content of the sixty-six books, God's demonstration of the kind of person he is. And the way he's handled this emergency is the greatest demonstration of all. As to, not how he treats his friends, but how he treats his enemies. How he treats the sick and the dying; how does he seek to win them back to trust? And some of us find that very wonderful.

So the purpose of the plan of salvation is not to adjust our legal standing, but the purpose of the plan of salvation is to win us back to trust so he can heal us, which he can readily do, and it is to confirm the trust of the onlooking universe. {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)

But now in 1 Kings 19:9:

He came to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he [that is, God] said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And he said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

You remember, God had to tell him that he wasn't the only one; there were others. But how do you think God feels about a person who's jealous for God? Isn't God jealous for our reputations? And his friends are jealous for his. Didn't Abraham show jealousy for God's reputation. And Moses? And the whole book of Job. Job's defending God, not himself, all through that book.

As witness, look at God's comment at the end, "Job has said of me what is right." He was jealous for God's reputation. This is where Elijah really was a friend, you see. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – 1&2 Kings, recorded November, 1981, 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 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/17MMPOGIA66> (Part 1- 1 Kings)

<http://pkp.cc/18MMPOGIA66> (Part 2- 1 Kings)

<http://pkp.cc/19MMPOGIA66> (Part 1- 2 Kings)

<http://pkp.cc/20MMPOGIA66> (Part 2- 2 Kings)

Further Study with Ellen White

Infinite love—how great it is! God made the world to enlarge heaven. He desires a larger family of created intelligences (MS 78, 1901). {1BC 1081.2}

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made "in the image of God," and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth (RH Feb. 11, 1902). {1BC 1081.3}

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. {MH 415.1}

He who causes the seed to spring up, who tends it day and night, who gives it power to develop, is the Author of our being, the King of heaven, and He exercises still greater care and interest in behalf of His children. While the human sower is planting the seed to sustain our earthly life, the Divine Sower will plant in the soul the seed that will bring forth fruit unto life everlasting. {COL 89.1}

Christ had been sent to earth to represent God in character. Jesus was the Life giver, the Teacher sent of God to provide salvation for a lost world, and to save men in spite of all Satan's temptations and lying deceptions. He himself was the gospel. In his teachings he clearly presented the great plan devised for the redemption of the race. Divinity had united with humanity for the purpose of uniting humanity with divinity, that through Christ man might become a partaker of the divine nature. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
{RH, July 7, 1896 par. 5}

Christ’s favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ’s own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world. {6T 55.1}

The fall of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent. Redemption was not an after thought, 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. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 3}

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character are revealed. 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 character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. Through Christ our Heavenly Father is made known as the God of love. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 5}

Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.—SC 11 (1892). {1MCP 250.1}

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}

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new leaven; that there might be brought to mankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness. {Ed 76.2}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man's well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. {Ed 76.4}

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied. {Ed 77.1}

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}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {MH 419.4}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {MH 422.2}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

Christ came to reveal to a fallen race the love of God. He, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of the brightness of His divinity, and came to live on this earth as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. No man has seen God at any time, except as He is revealed through Christ. {UL 334.5}

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}

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all unto Me." {DA 626.1}

The meekness and humility that characterized the life of Christ will be made manifest in the life and character of those who "walk even as he walked." {SD 81.5}

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}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. Then the prevarications and accusations of him who had once been an exalted angel were seen in their true light. It was seen that his professedly spotless character was deceptive. His deeply laid scheme to exalt himself to supremacy was fully discerned. His falsehoods were apparent to all. God's authority was forever established. Truth triumphed over falsehood. {RC 60.3}

The heavenly universe had witnessed the weapons that were chosen by the Prince of life—the words of Scripture, "It is written"; and the weapons used by the prince of the world—falsehood and deception. They had seen the Prince of life deal in straightforward lines of truth, honesty, and integrity, while the prince of the world exercised his power of cunning, artful secrecy, intrigue, enmity, and revenge. They had seen the One who bore the banner of truth sacrifice everything, even His life, to maintain truth, while the one who bore the banner of rebellion continued to strengthen his accusations against the God of truth. {RC 60.5}

The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. {TA 205.2}

Christ revealed all of God that sinful human beings could bear without being destroyed. He is the divine Teacher, the Enlightener. Had God thought us in need of revelations other than those made through Christ and in His written word, He would have given them. {8T 266.1}