

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2018: *Preparation for the End Time*

Lesson 6 “The ‘Change’ of the Law”

Read for this week’s study

Romans 8:1; 7:15–25; Romans 7:1–14; John 20:19–23; Acts 20:6, 7; Daniel 7:23–25; Revelation 13:1–17.

Memory Text

“He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time” (Daniel 7:25, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Promise
- III. The Law and Sin
- IV. From Sabbath to Sunday?
- V. The Seventh day in the New Testament
- VI. The Attempted Change of the Sabbath
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. In Western courts and legislatures we are modifying laws all the time. So why is changing law seen as such a bad thing in Daniel 7:25? What do people mean by “judicial overreach?” Is that relevant here? Where is the line between interpretation and updating law, on the one hand, and judicial overreach on the other? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Romans 7:15-25. What is Paul saying in these verses that makes Romans 8:1 so reassuring? When it comes to sin, what is the real problem? In what ways can you relate to what Paul is saying in these verses in your personal experience? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Romans 7:1-14. What is the relationship between the law and sin? What do these verses tell us about the impossibility of being saved by the law? Read Romans 7:13 carefully. In what way does Paul argue that the law is still necessary for the Christian? (Monday’s lesson)

4. A number of New Testament texts are used by some as evidence that the earliest church switched from Sabbath to Sunday worship immediately after the resurrection of Jesus. Read John 20:19-23. What reason does it give for the disciples being assembled on the first day of the week? Read Acts 20:6-7. What do these verses have to do with a supposed change from Saturday to Sunday? On exactly what day of our week did this meeting actually occur? Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-4. What is Paul asking them to do in this passage and what, if anything, does that say about their day of worship? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. There are a number of important references to the Sabbath in the New Testament. Read Luke 4:14-16. What does this tell us about the worship habits of Jesus during His time on earth? Read Luke 23:55-56. What does this passage tell us about the Sabbath practices of Jesus' followers at the time of the cross? Thirty years later? Read Acts 13:14, 42-44 and 16:12-13. What evidence do these texts give about the Sabbath-keeping practices of Paul and his missionary companions? Read Mark 2:27-28. What does this passage tell us about the origin of the Sabbath that helps us understand its relevance for Christians? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. The above study of the Bible reveals the following historical realities: In New Testament times most or all Christians kept the Sabbath alongside their Jewish brothers and sisters. Today most Christians worship on Sunday. How did that change occur and does it matter to us today? Is Sabbath versus Sunday a trivial matter or does it have serious spiritual implications? (Thursday's lesson)
7. Read Daniel 7:23-25. What do these verses suggest about the origins of Sunday-keeping? Did it arise from biblical convictions or from convictions about the authority of the church on earth? Read Revelation 13:1-17 and compare with Daniel 7, especially verses 21-25. What are the implications of Daniel 7 for the End Time context? How does Revelation 14:7 in its larger context show that the Sabbath will be a crucial issue in the end-time crisis over worship? (Thursday's lesson)
8. If someone told you that keeping the seventh-day Sabbath is a form of salvation by works how would you respond? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

All the law requires is that we love him and we love each other, and behave accordingly. If God changes his law, the quality of life in the hereafter would deteriorate. We do not wish him to change it! So eventually it will be written on our hearts, where a man does his thinking. It becomes thinking obedience, intelligent obedience. We don't love because we're told to; we love because we're absolutely sold on this. We agree with God; we actually do love him, and love each other. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Larger View*, #2, recorded October, 1982, Monterey, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/2MMLVIEW>*

By the narrow view I mean the view that is preoccupied with what God has done for you and me. And that might be perfectly understandable in the lives of some of us. We still even have our tents pitched at the foot of Sinai. We have no right to tell anybody where he should have his tent pitched. But in the narrower view that is preoccupied with our own salvation, consistently the seventh-day Sabbath is presented as a mere test of obedience. But in the larger view, in the setting of the great controversy over the character of God, the Sabbath is God's gift to us, to remind us of the answers in the great controversy. To remind us of all the things he revealed about himself, and about freedom, and about his unselfishness in the Garden of Eden. How he even shared his creative power with us, and enabled us to create little people in our own image. Magnificent was the revelation given during creation week, and the Sabbath was given to remind us of those truths. But then when we lost our freedom, and God gave it back to us again, he says in the other version of the Ten Commandments, which has just as much authority as the Exodus one, the Sabbath was given to remind us of how God rescued us from Egyptian bondage. Sabbath is a monument to freedom. And then at the end of crucifixion week, when the ultimate questions about God were answered by the way Jesus suffered and died, the next day was seventh-day Sabbath, and the whole universe paused, earth time, to think and to remember and to celebrate the answer that God gave. The Sabbath is even described in the Bible as a type and a foretaste of the final rest to come. Instead of the Sabbath being a mere test of obedience, it becomes a great aid to us, and a time of celebration of the truth that is the basis of our trust, and the basis of our freedom. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Larger View*, #1, recorded October, 1982, Monterey, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMLVIEW>*

Graham: The sealing is mentioned first in Revelation, then the mark of the beast. I think the mark of the beast, really a symbol of loyalty to the opposition, should be compared with the symbol of loyalty to God. I believe that to receive the seal of God is to be so settled into the truth both intellectually and spiritually that one cannot be moved. I believe that to receive the "mark of the beast" is to be so settled into the lie, and there are Scriptures that talk about the Lie, preferring Satan's lies to the truth—you've substituted his lies for the truth; I believe to receive the mark of the beast is to be so settled into Satan's false picture of God that not even the Spirit of God could move us. We cannot be moved. So in essence, the seal or the mark represents an inner decision and commitment for eternity with respect to God.

Lou : For those of us who have roots in Seventh-day Adventism, for example, the seal of God has been tied very closely to the Sabbath. In fact, I thought we had referred to the Sabbath as the seal of God in itself. But I hear you making a distinction there.

Graham: Well, one has to stop and realize that the people who crucified Christ kept the Seventh-day Sabbath scrupulously; very, very carefully. Did they have the seal of God? They

certainly were not settled into the truth about God. When Jesus brought the truth about God, they said he had a devil, and they killed him to silence his witness. On the other hand though, you remember the evening we talked about how the Sabbath sums up the good news about our God? I believe that the knowing, meaningful, intelligent, thoughtful observance of the Seventh Day—as a reminder of all these great demonstrations of the truth about our God, could be an outward expression of an inward conviction and a “settling into” this truth about our God. The seventh-day Sabbath beautifully fits this mark of identification of those who are committed to the truth about God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10 with Lou Venden, “The Reminder Of The 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/10MMCAG>*

Further Study with 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. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. 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. {COL 97.3}

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}

But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of

God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.” Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience. {SC 60.2}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP 34.3}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. “Come now, and let us reason together” is the Creator’s invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. {MB 109.2}

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}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

Satan is ever at work endeavoring to pervert what God has spoken, to blind the mind and darken the understanding, and thus lead men into sin. This is why the Lord is so explicit, making His requirements so very plain that none need err. God is constantly seeking to draw men close under His protection, that Satan may not practice his cruel, deceptive power upon them. {PP 503.3}

The glory of Christ is revealed in the law, which is a transcript of His character, and His transforming efficacy is felt upon the soul until men become changed to His likeness. They are made partakers of the divine nature, and grow more and more like their Saviour, advancing step by step in conformity to the will of God, till they reach perfection. {1SM 240.3}

Before the entrance of evil there was peace and joy throughout the universe. All was in perfect harmony with the Creator's will. Love for God was supreme, love for one another impartial. {GC 493.1}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {Ed 16.1}

Like the first is the second commandment—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 22:39. The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service

we receive the highest culture of every faculty. More and more fully do we become partakers of the divine nature. We are fitted for heaven, for we receive heaven into our hearts. {Ed 16.2}

After He had created our world and man, He looked upon the work that He had done, and pronounced it very good. And when the foundation of the earth was laid, the foundation of the Sabbath was laid also. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. In giving the Sabbath, God considered man's spiritual and physical health. {TM 136.1}

Great blessings are enfolded in the observance of the Sabbath, and God desires that the Sabbath day shall be to us a day of joy. There was joy at the institution of the Sabbath. God looked with satisfaction upon the work of His hands. All things that He had made He pronounced "very good." Genesis 1:31. Heaven and earth were filled with rejoicing. "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:7. Though sin has entered the world to mar His perfect work, God still gives to us the Sabbath as a witness that One omnipotent, infinite in goodness and mercy, created all things. Our heavenly Father desires through the observance of the Sabbath to preserve among men a knowledge of Himself. He desires that the Sabbath shall direct our minds to Him as the true and living God, and that through knowing Him we may have life and peace. {6T 349.1}

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment was instituted in Eden. After God had made the world, and created man upon the earth, He made the Sabbath for man. After Adam's sin and fall nothing was taken from the law of God. The principles of the ten commandments existed before the fall, and were of a character suited to the condition of a holy order of beings. After the fall, the principles of those precepts were not changed, but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state (3SG 295). {1BC 1104.3}

The Sabbath is a sign of creative and redeeming power; it points to God as the source of life and knowledge; it recalls man's primeval glory, and thus witnesses to God's purpose to re-create us in His own image. {Ed 250.1}

The Sabbath and the family were alike instituted in Eden, and in God's purpose they are indissolubly linked together. On this day more than on any other, it is possible for us to live the life of Eden. . . . {Ed 250.2}

God is merciful. His requirements are reasonable, in accordance with the goodness and benevolence of His character. The object of the Sabbath was that all mankind might be benefited. Man was not made to fit the Sabbath; for the Sabbath was made after the creation of man, to meet his necessities. After God had made the world in six days, He rested and sanctified and blessed the day upon which He rested from all His work which He had created and made. He set apart that special day for man to rest from his labor, that, as he should look upon the earth beneath and the heavens above, he might reflect that God made all these in six

days and rested upon the seventh; and that, as he should behold the tangible proofs of God's infinite wisdom, his heart might be filled with love and reverence for his Maker. {2T 582.3}

The Sabbath is God's memorial, pointing men to their Creator, who made the world and all things that are therein. In the everlasting hills, in the lofty trees, in every opening bud and blooming flower, we may behold the work of the great Master Artist. All speak to us of God and His glory. {TM 137.1}