

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2018: *Preparation for the End Time*

Lesson 8 “Worship the Creator”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 14:6, 7; Matthew 24:14; Galatians 3:22; Luke 23:32–43; Genesis 22:12; Revelation 14:8–12.

Memory Text

“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Universality of the Gospel
- III. The Thief on the Cross and the “Everlasting Gospel”
- IV. Fear God and Give Glory to Him
- V. The Hour of His Judgment Has Come
- VI. Worship the One Who Made the Heavens and Earth
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Today we believe that the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6–12 is ‘present truth’ for those living in the last days prior to Christ’s return and the fulfillment of all our hopes as Christians. This week, we will focus particularly on the first angel’s message, for it contains truths crucial for those who seek to stay faithful amid end-time perils.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. The General Conference recently reformulated the mission statement of the church. It now reads: “The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to call all people to become disciples of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the everlasting gospel embraced by the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12, and to prepare the world for Christ’s soon return.” (GC WP A05 05)
3. What do we mean when we say that “our mission is to proclaim the everlasting gospel embraced by the three angels message (Revelations 14:6-12)”? Is that gospel any different than the one revealed in the life, death, resurrection and high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ? Is the gospel enhanced by what is presented in the three angels’ messages? How is all that related to the warning given in Galatians 1:6-9?

4. “How do the texts of Revelation 14:6, Matthew 24:14, 28:19 together help us understand how important outreach and witness are to our purpose as a church?” (Sunday’s lesson) Is the actual emphasis on outreach and witness or is it on the gospel? In other words, is the gospel a package that needs to be delivered to all homes around the world, or is it “the news” that needs to be understood?
5. “‘Every nation, tribe, tongue, and people’ have done wrong, have violated God’s law, and have been ‘confined under sin.’ Adam’s fall in Eden has impacted every human being; no nation or tribe or people has been immune. We all face the immediate consequences of sin, and unless a remedy was provided, we all would face the ultimate consequence: eternal death.” (Sunday’s lesson)
6. While such a definition of the sin problem is theologically accurate, what is implied by formulating it this way? How would you define the sin problem? Does it affect only this world, or are the effects realized throughout the universe beyond our planet?
7. “How does the story of the thief on the cross (Luke 23:32–43) reveal the great hope of the “everlasting gospel” for all sinners?” (Monday’s lesson)
8. What does it mean to fear God and to give Him glory (Revelation 14:7)? It has been said that “the idea of fearing God is linked to obeying Him, and when we obey God, when we do what is right, we bring glory to Him.” (Tuesday’s lesson) If we emphasize this model of interpretation, do we risk implying that salvation depends on **our performance**? Is it possible then to end up in legalism and despair, killing the gospel by our well-meant interpretation?
9. What is the significance of the statement that “the hour of His judgment has come”? “If the Bible is clear about any teaching, it is clear that God is a God of justice and of judgment. One day the judgment and justice so lacking in this world will indeed come. No wonder people need to fear God.” (Wednesday’s lesson)
10. “If the gospel means ‘good news,’ it means that though we are all sinners and have broken God’s law, when the judgment day comes, like the thief on the cross, we will not face the penalty and punishment that we deserve for our sin and law-breaking.” (Wednesday’s lesson) Is that the good news about the hour of His judgment?
11. Why does the call to fear God and give glory to Him come together with the call to worship God as the Creator, who made the heaven and earth?
12. How does our understanding of the gospel color everything else we believe? Why is this so significant especially in the context of last day events?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: I was intrigued by the Maxwell version when I saw it on our reference sheet. But in that reference, Romans 3:25, 26, why do so many versions translate this passage to suggest that the gospel is not a revelation of God’s character or the kind of Person God is, God’s righteousness,

but instead it's a revelation of God's activity, of the plan of salvation. What is the gospel? The truth about God—or is it the truth about how God saves us? Which would you say? It seems like that's an important distinction that you're making here.

Graham: Ah, that's good. Yes, the Greek says rather simply that the gospel derives its power from the fact that it reveals the righteousness of God. Now, right below, where it says, "The wrath of God is revealed," the Greek is the same; and if that's God's wrath one verse below, it's God's righteousness above. But many of our good Christian friends say, "Why would God's righteousness need to be revealed? He's the Sovereign, of course he's righteous." You see, following Luther's example, they have no great controversy over the character and government of God. In the larger, great controversy view, it's God's righteousness that has been challenged, and if God is not proved to be righteous, there is no basis for our trust. The good news is that God is righteous. Well, those who feel there has never been a conflict over his righteousness, choose something else, "It's God's way of righting you and me." What's beautiful about this, though, is if you take this as it literally reads, the good news is about God's righteousness, the revelation of God's righteousness is the way in which he rights you and me. And so the larger view contains the smaller view, but the narrow view denies the larger view. That's what I like about the larger view. You can be much more generous when you hold it. You can say, the beautiful *Good News Bible*, "God's way of righting wrong," or something like that, "God's way of setting men right with himself." That's beautiful. But what is God's way of setting men right with himself? It is at infinite cost to reveal and demonstrate the truth about his own righteousness. So I can say, "That's a nice version, but that's the narrow view." The larger great controversy view, which is our privilege to explain from the sixty-six books, allows the Bible to be translated very literally there, and even leaves room for these narrower views which are more preoccupied with what God has done for you and me. To many of our friends, the good news is what God has done for you and me.

Lou: The plan of salvation.

Graham: The plan of salvation, you see. The larger view is the good news that God is not as his enemies have made him out to be. He is instead, like this. And to see him like that is to be won to repentance and faith. The plan of salvation has at its very heart the revelation and the demonstration of the truth about the righteousness of God. That's a more inclusive view. That's why we venture sometimes to call it the "larger view." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #16 with Lou Venden, "God's Last Pleading With His Children" recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>*

But surely no story is more encouraging than the story of the thief on the cross. What did he do, for Jesus to say those wonderful words in Luke 23:42- 43? “And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, . . . ‘You will be with me in Paradise.’” (RSV)

There was the thief hanging on the cross with a thief hanging on the other side and Jesus in the middle. And the two robbers were cursing and swearing and mocking Jesus, as were the crowds. Something happened to the thief. He listened to Jesus saying, “Father, forgive them.” And he listened to Jesus say, “John, please look after Mother when I’m gone.” And maybe the thief had a mother, and that really touched him. But then that saying “Father forgive them.” Because over the head of Christ it said “The King of the Jews.” And the thief thought to himself, “If Jesus ever really has a kingdom, and rules over a kingdom where the king says, ‘I forgive you,’ I’m a thief, I need to be forgiven. I wouldn’t be safe in any other kingdom than a kingdom where the king says, ‘I forgive you. I forgive you.’” And he said, “Jesus, if that’s the kind of kingdom you’re going to reign over, I’d like to live in it. Please, could you remember me?” And I think that was a little tentative. He didn’t know how Jesus was going to respond. And then there came back the words that confirmed his trust. “Yes, I’d be pleased to remember you.”

And the thief died—with his tithe unpaid, and all kinds of things in his stomach. He never made restitution to anybody, wasn’t baptized, never kept a Sabbath. But he’ll be in the kingdom! Because after he died, the next moment of consciousness in the resurrection, the thief will come face to face with that same person in the middle. And Jesus will say to him, “You have a lot to learn.” And the thief will say, “If you say so. That’s alright with me.”

I hope that if anything should happen to any of us on the way home tonight, that we would die God’s trusting friend. Because if we do, we will arise the next moment of consciousness face to face with God. And we will not be afraid—because we know the truth. We trust him, know him, love him, and all those other things. We’ve been set right. And if when we see him face to face, and he should say to us, “You know, there’s a great deal for you to learn,” we would say, “We would be pleased to listen, because we trust you. We admire you. We want to be your friend.”

You see, faith is just a word we use to describe a relationship with God as with a person well-known. And the better he is known, the better this relationship may be. Faith implies an attitude toward God of love, of trust, and deepest admiration. It means having enough confidence in God based upon the more than adequate evidence revealed, to be willing to believe what he says; to accept what He offers. And to do what he wishes, without reservation; no cheating, for the rest of eternity. Anyone who has such faith would be perfectly safe to save. This is why faith is the only requirement for Heaven, and for salvation. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3, “All God Asks is Trust” recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/3MMCAG>*

Now as you look over those three messages, there are many terms that call for explanation. But they are all discussed elsewhere in the Bible. That is why we really need all previous sixty-five books to understand the sixty-sixth. Some of these terms we discussed in earlier conversations, such as the first word of the first angel: *fear*, fear God. You recall in our conversation “There is No Need to be Afraid of God,” that when the context so indicates, this is not terror. This is reverence. This could be translated “revere God,” “honor God.” Surely with the angel bringing good news, he wouldn’t bring the good news that we should be *terrified* of God. So a number of versions have ventured to do so and I would agree with them, “Honor God, Reverence God.” That can indeed be the meaning of fear.

But surely there is much fearsome wording in these three angels’ messages. If this is God’s last pleading with his children, would it be better perhaps to have just the first angel’s message, and then the last sentence of number three? If this is pleading with us to trust him, might it have been better to just have it say, “Honor God. Give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the seas, and the springs of water.” And then go straight to, “This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.” Why do we need all that fearsome wording in between? Wouldn’t that have seemed more like pleading?

Of course, we must note the sequence of what has gone before, particularly Revelation 12, 13, and then 14. You recall that chapter 12 describes the war, and all the efforts of Satan to deceive both angels and men. Then chapter 13 describes Satan’s final efforts to deceive, which is the subject for our conversation next time. This time, in his final effort, he is primarily seeking to deceive the people living on this planet. Chapter 13 describes Satan’s almost complete success. The whole world worships him, except for a certain few. It even describes the powers and the organizations that Satan works through in order to accomplish his deceptive purposes. These powers and organizations are represented by certain symbols in the customary biblical way that we are familiar with. More than that, near the end of chapter 13 that describes his final campaign, his loyal followers are pictured as bearing a certain mark of their preference for him and their trust in him—that mark that is notoriously known as the “*mark of the beast.*”

Then comes chapter 14, God’s last pleading with his children, the three final messages of warning and invitation that are the subject of our conversation this evening. Knowing what has gone before one is not so surprised to find the fearsome words of warning in the second and third angel’s messages. But we should always note when we read these three, that the first angel comes with good news. He comes with the everlasting gospel. And as you know, gospel means good news. Notice that he doesn’t come with new information. God’s last appeal is not something new. It is not something additional. It is the everlasting good news. For this good news has always been the truth. It will always remain the truth. It will always remain the basis of our faith and trust, and freedom for eternity. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio

series, Conversations About God, #16, "God's Last Pleading With His Children" recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>*

Someone came between because of the emergency. It's not ideal. God would like to deal directly with us, face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. But because we don't know God, and we've been afraid, God has given us these pictures. He's given us a picture even of Jesus being our judge. Doesn't Jesus deal with this? He says, "You're all comforted that I'm going to be your judge. Because you were scared my Father was going to judge you, isn't that right?" They said, "Oh, we're so relieved you're going to be our judge." Is that because the Father is not as gracious and forgiving as the Son, that we say we're glad the Son's going to be our judge? So before he went back to heaven, he said, "I've got to clear that up, too. Actually, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. You'd receive just as gracious judgment from my Father as from me. But I'd like to take you a step further. I'm not going to judge you anyway." "Oh, there'll be something that will judge you. The truth will judge you. The truth about my Father in the great controversy. The truth about the kind of person he is and what he wants of his children, and the way he governs the universe. That's the truth. If you have loved that truth and it has led you to repentance and faith and trust, you will have stood humbly in our presence and said, 'What must I do to be saved and healed?' and we will have been able to save and heal you, and all will be well. But if you have turned down this truth about my Father and about me, you will not know us; you will not be our friends; you will not trust us enough to listen; we will not be able to heal you; and you will perish and we will cry." And that's the judgment. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from audio series, "Picture of God in All 66", Leviticus, recorded October 1981, Riverside CA} {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Leviticus, 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/5MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/6MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

I have heard servants sometimes charge that friends lack a keen sense of justice. They do not leave room in their understanding of God for just and essential punishment. Their God is simply too weak and kind. "You have a marshmallow God," I heard one servant say.

The truth is precisely the opposite. Friend-believers have great concern about righteousness, which is the literal meaning of the Greek word often translated "justice." The English word "justice" comes from the Latin translation of the Greek. (Latin, "*justitia*")

Friends admire God's righteousness and would love to be like him. And to do what is right is, of course, to do what is just. But servants tend to think of justice in terms of retribution and punishment.

"I find comfort in the thought that some day God will bring retribution on those who have hurt me so much," I heard a believer say. "Now, I'm not asking for vengeance, you understand. I'm just asking for justice." {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 109-110. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter8.html>

Further Study with Ellen White

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness. {COL 386.1}

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}

Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain. {MB 60.3}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and results of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. Satan had declared that the law of God was faulty, and that the good of the universe demanded a change in its requirement. In attacking the law, he thought to overthrow the authority of its Author, and gain for himself the supreme allegiance. But through the plan of salvation the precepts of the law were to be proved perfect and immutable, that at last one glory and love might rise to God throughout the universe, ascribing glory and honor and praise to him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 12}

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}

All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. {MH 253.3}

In the command to go into the highways and hedges, Christ sets forth the work of all whom He calls to minister in His name. The whole world is the field for Christ's ministers. The whole human family is comprised in their congregation. The Lord desires that His word of grace shall be brought home to every soul. {COL 229.1}

The truth is all powerful and far reaching. It will unite nationalities in one great brotherhood. . . . Christ in men unites them on one grand platform, preparing for the uniting in one family in heaven. It is the truth that makes men one and removes national prejudice. . . . {OHC 171.4}

The truth will have the same molding influence upon hearts whatever the nationalities. Every human heart that accepts the truth will bow to the majesty of its sway, and when Christ is abiding in the heart by faith they will be of one mind, for Christ is not divided. They will be strong in His strength, happy and united in His peace. The truth is the same in its subduing power upon all hearts. It will refine and ennoble the heart of the receiver. {OHC 171.5}

God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. {COL 84.4}

We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty. {GC 36.1}

Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world. {DA 21.3}

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is “alienated from the life of God.” Christ says, “All they that hate Me love death.” Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. {DA 764.1}

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}

But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God’s love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. {DA 764.3}

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}