

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2018: *Preparation for the End Time*

Lesson 12 “Babylon and Armageddon”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 14:8; 16:19; Isaiah 52:9; Revelation 18:1-10; 16:12-16; 1 Kings 18:1-40; 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2.

Memory Text

“On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Revelation 17:5, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. “The Wine of Her Wrath”
- III. Babylon Is Fallen
- IV. Armageddon
- V. Armageddon and Mount Carmel: Part 1
- VI. Armageddon and Mount Carmel: Part 2
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week, we will look at Babylon and Armageddon, and seek to learn what the Bible is telling us with these images.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. “It has been said that the Bible is a tale of two cities, Jerusalem and Babylon. While Jerusalem stood for the city of God and His covenant people all through the Bible (Psalm 102:21, Isaiah 52:9, 65:19, Revelation 3:12), Babylon has stood for oppression, violence, false religion, and outright rebellion against God.” (Sunday’s lesson)
3. How does the story of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) and the role Babylon plays in the book of Daniel (chapters 1-6) help us to understand the intended meaning and significance?
4. Twice in the book of Revelation it says that “Babylon is fallen” (14:8 & 18:2). What was the significance of this for: 1) the people of Israel during the time king Cyrus (cf.

Isaiah 21:9 & Jeremiah 51:8); 2) the early Christians during the time of John (cf. 1 Peter 5:13, etc.) and 3) for God's people at the end of ages?

5. Scientists say measuring intelligence is rather complicated and multi-faceted. That's why they came up with an IQ number – Intelligence Quotient. Because Babylon is a way of thinking, similarly, we need to ask: What is our BQ [Babylonian quotient]? Otherwise, we end up with an exclusivist religion seeing ourselves as the only true and faithful ones and condemning everybody else (see Revelation 16:15).
6. “Many Christians who are familiar with the book of Revelation and believe in it see the battle of Armageddon as a literal military conflict in the Middle East near the end of the world. [...] However, the Bible gives a totally different picture. Scripture presents Armageddon as the ultimate climax, not between squabbling nations, but between the two sides of the cosmic controversy. It's a religious struggle, not economic or political, however much economic and political factors might come into play.” (Tuesday's lesson)
7. Armageddon is mentioned during the sixth bowl of plagues of God's wrath. What is the significance and purpose of the seven last plagues? How does this influence our understanding of the meaning of Armageddon?
8. What is the connection between the battle of Armageddon and Elijah's Mount Carmel experience? In what sense is it helpful and in what sense do we need to be careful not to stretch the story too far?
9. Revelation 16:12-16 does not describe the actual battle; it is the gathering of forces for the battle. The battle itself, which accomplishes the fall of Babylon, will be outlined in the seventh bowl plague (16:17-21) and in chapters 17-18.
10. What is the significance of the fact that at Mt. Carmel it was God who brought down fire as proof that He is the true God, while at the end the beast brings fire down (Revelation 13:13,14) to deceive the whole world?
11. What is it about 'public opinion' that happens to go along with the prevailing mood that persuades the great and powerful to commit themselves to a hopeless cause and a lost battle? What is the lesson for us? What does it mean to stay vigilant and not to be caught half naked (16:15)?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Well, this even fits in a bit with Jonah. You remember they said, “You must be being punished by your God. You must have done something very bad.” You see, people who are being punished, who are getting into trouble, or who are being conquered by other nations, obviously their God is not blessing them, and others then would gloat in pride. When we watch the wicked being destroyed, if we are within the city, will we feel, “I thank thee, God, that I am not

like these outside being destroyed.” And the Lord might say, “Some error was made, you should be out there with them if you feel that way.”

Don’t you think that God’s whole attitude toward vengeance is involved here in the book of Obadiah? Since at the end, assuming that we will be saved, and we watch as the glory of God is unveiled, and all that is out of harmony with him is consumed, and to use the words of Scripture, “Fire comes down from God out of Heaven and the wicked are destroyed.” How do you expect to feel at the time? Might we be saying, “Well, they surely deserved it”? I had someone say to me just a little while ago, “If Idi Amin doesn’t get what he fully deserves then God is not a just God.” And this individual really meant it. And that’s not unique. I’ve heard it said of other individuals in history.

How *will* we feel? Well, do we have any indication, from Hosea, for example, how God will feel? Are bad people his children, just as much as good people? And he’s losing his own children, and will never see them again. And Hosea has God crying, “How can I give you up? How can I let you go?” And if we are within the city, we will feel as he does. So I hate any suggestion that there will be any deep sense of satisfaction, of justice, within us as we look and say, “Well, that person is really getting what he deserves.” I don’t think there will be any room for that feeling. It will be a time of very great grief. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*, recorded March, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/45MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/46MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Look at the real meaning of God’s wrath. And this was not new with Paul. It’s all through the Old Testament; most dramatically in Hosea eleven. Again, I wish we could read the whole chapter. Hosea 11, just verses 7 and 8: “My people are bent on turning away from me . . . but how, oh how can I give you up, Ephraim! How, oh how, can I hand you over Israel!” (Phillips)

Did Jesus understand that this is the experience he was passing through? Did Jesus know he was being given up as Hosea describes it? And as Paul says later in Romans 1 and 4? What did Jesus cry just before he died? “My God, my God, why are you beating me up? Why are you torturing me? Why are you killing me?”

No! “Why have you given me up?” He knew.

We should have come earlier though, to Gethsemane. For he began this awesome experience of demonstrating the truth about God’s gracious but awful warning, that the wages of sin is death. We should have come to Gethsemane. And there Jesus fell to the ground dying. The

angels were watching. Was God killing his Son in the garden of Gethsemane, or did Jesus feel his unity with his Father breaking up? He began to feel the awesome loneliness of being given up. Had Jesus been left in the garden of Gethsemane, and died there, could you say that the Father had killed the Son? Had he been a mere creature you wouldn't know; but the angels knew who Jesus was. They knew that he was God. And they knew the meaning of his words. I should have included the verse in John 10:18. Jesus said, "No one takes my life from me. No one can. I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up." The angels knew that was the truth. And if Jesus died it was not because his Father had killed him. The Father was giving him up and both of them suffered and the Father was crying, "How can I give you up?" The Son who had assumed humanity was the one who died. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, "The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence" recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>*

You ask what we Adventists have to offer, Billy Graham and the Lutherans and so on. They have never known what to do with the book of Revelation. And many of us only use it to try to work out the schedule of events to come and we have to keep revising that. When I was a boy we all knew that World War II would be Armageddon and so on. Well, my father said he thought World War I would be Armageddon. He nearly didn't marry my mother because they thought it would be. But then he looked at the verse occupy till I come and that's why we six are alive and thanked our parents for finding that other key text. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, We've Camped Around This Mountain Long Enough, #8, recorded July, 1989, South Dakota Conference Ministers Meeting} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAMPED>*

You take the plague of Armageddon for example. You notice that the world is gathered together for this battle. You mean they are not gathered until the sixth plague? They are already being gathered now aren't they? So the circumstances that reach their climax under the sixth plague are well developed at the present time. How about the conditions on our planet? They seem to be described by the first plagues.

It almost looks like environmental decay is well under way. Ellen White has eloquent ways of saying that "the devil imparts a deadly taint to the air." She speaks of his actually bringing sickness on the human race and then coming as the great medical missionary to heal the sick. And they say, "Truly Christ has come." You see how he could do that? And I see all that under the seven last plagues where God has, "poured out his wrath", which equals, he has given

people up to reap the natural consequences of their own rebellious choices. They do not desire his protection which also suggests to me the reality of the protection we all enjoy right now.

If we were not protected the devil would be treating us as he did Job. We would be losing everything. And it's interesting that the devil could do anything to Job except take his life. Have we not said that will happen to the group at the end? He can do anything to them except take their lives. There is no place to hide in the end. When God ceases to protect, all hell will break loose. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Revelation*, recorded August, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/79MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/80MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. {FLB 287.7}

All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. We must search the Scriptures carefully with a heart open to the reception of light and the evidences of truth. We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures. {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}