

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2018: *The Book of Acts*

Lesson 7 “Paul’s First Missionary Journey”

Read for this week’s study

Acts 13; 2 Corinthians 4:7–10; Romans 10:1–4; Romans 3:19; Acts 14:1–26; Romans 9–11.

Memory Text

“Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through [H]im everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses’ ” (Acts 13:38, 39, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Salamis and Paphos
- III. Pisidian Antioch: Part I
- IV. Pisidian Antioch: Part II
- V. Iconium
- VI. Lystra and Derbe
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The New Testament never says that Luke was a Gentile, so where did that idea come from? See what clues you can find in Colossians 4:7-14. The earliest (Jewish) church began to feel threatened when large numbers of Gentiles started coming in. What are the limits of diversity most people can handle in a religious community? One per cent? Ten per cent? Fifty per cent? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Acts 13:1-12. What does the New Testament imply by the “laying on of hands”? What are the main points we can learn from Luke’s narrative about Paul and Barnabas in Cyprus? Why do you think the governor is called a “man of intelligence”? What is the significance of the name change from Saul to Paul? Why does Paul always begin with the synagogues? What does this whole story tell us about God? How did this incident prepare Paul’s mind for Romans 11? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Acts 13:13-16. What insight does this passage give us about Paul’s method of evangelism? Who is Paul speaking to when he says, “You who fear God”? Read Acts 13:16-41. What are the three main parts of this sermon? What is the core message

of the sermon according to Acts 13:38-39? Why can't the law save anyone? How do you reconcile the law's inability to justify with the expectation that people will obey it? (Monday's lesson)

4. Read Acts 13:42-50. How did the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia receive Paul's message? What is the role of jealousy in the development of people's theology? Does theological jealousy happen today? If so, what does it look like? What is meant by "devout women"? Why would Paul favor "easy religion"? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Read Acts 14:1-7. What was the result of Paul and Barnabas's activities in Iconium? What would Paul say is the best way to study the Old Testament with Jewish people? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. Read Acts 14:5-19. What picture of God did the people of Lystra have? How did Paul approach Jews and Gentiles differently? How do you explain the Lystrians' sudden change of mind? Which is more important to most peoples' religion, their beliefs or their culture? Which is more powerful in Adventism, its culture or its beliefs? Read Acts 14:20-26. How did Paul and Barnabas finish their journey? (Thursday's lesson)
7. Thinking of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, how do we respond when we are tempted to take credit for what God has done? (Friday's lesson)
8. What can we do individually and collectively to nourish and strengthen the faith of new converts? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

I think when he said this, he showed himself way in advance of many modern theologians, who beg for forgiveness, but don't ask for the clean heart and right spirit. Nobody's going to be saved without the clean heart and the right spirit. Forgiveness doesn't get us into heaven. That's legalism. Heaven will not be peopled with pardoned crooks, but with people who have new hearts and right spirits; and we don't have to use just this verse, but how about what Jesus said to Nicodemus? He didn't say, "Nicodemus, unless you be officially pardoned, you'll not get into the kingdom." He said, "Unless you have a new heart and right spirit, and be reborn, you'll not see the kingdom." That runs all through the Bible. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – 2 Samuel, recorded 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 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/15MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/16MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

And forgiveness doesn't take care of that change. That's why salvation is more than forgiveness, it means healing the damage done. Sin really changes us. The legalist thinks he can

go and get it just covered or erased or forgiven or pardoned or forgotten. That's legalism. But to recognize that sin damages us, we're never the same. Adam and Eve were never the same. They were hurt by this thing. They could not pass on a perfect nature to their children. They were weakened. That's why it's suicide to sin. The reasons for avoiding sin are not just that "it upsets our righteous heavenly Father". It also is utterly destructive and he does not wish us to destroy ourselves. There's every reason for not sinning. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, *We've Camped Around This Mountain Long Enough, #1*, 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/1MMCAMPED>*

I do not find those legal concepts in the book of Romans. But that's where they say you get propitiation. Ah, but what is propitiation? It's been loaded in one direction. Justification's been loaded. Sanctification's been loaded. And Paul never used one of those words anyway. It would be very helpful, I think, for us to drop every one of these heavily, now prejudiced and biased and conditioned terms, since they weren't used by the Bible anyway, and adopt some nice new simple ones. For justification I would nominate "set right". For sanctification I'd nominate "keep right". Ellen White loves those words. She says, "The only way in which God could set and keep men right was to reveal the truth about his character." This is a magnificent article, "God Made Manifest In Christ," where all the way through she says what went wrong was a false picture of God. {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)

Hopefully we're drawn toward the gospel, eventually, from all corners of the earth, and religion, and experience, and culture. And the one unifying thing in Ephesians is the unity inherent in our trust and our knowledge of the Son of God. Eventually, when we come to see God, we have this. Along the way, we may have obeyed many rules which God never gave. Isn't that true of the Jews? We might, even tonight, rejoicing in the freedom that comes from knowing the truth about God, still have some customs and traditions which we don't need to follow. It's possible, isn't it? And the Lord would love to set us free. However, Paul would be very respectful toward a person being so conscientious, and yet carrying a heavy burden. {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>*

For a good contrast between the Spirit, who's always associated with love and truth and thoughtfulness; you remember we talked about the intelligent worship God desires in Romans 12:1? The opposite say, in Isaiah 29:13. And the Jews in Galatia would know these verses. Now here's flesh, which is not thinking, it's not intelligent, it's not the worship of heart and mind. Isaiah 29:13:

The Lord said because this people draw near with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear [their reverence, their worship], of me is a commandment of men learned by rote.

Just thoughtless, mechanical worship. That's legalism. And Jesus commented on this in Matthew 15, and again in Mark 7. But let's look at Matthew 15:8 first:

Well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men."

An interesting variation in the text. Then look at Mark 7. And in both these settings, Jesus is dealing with the thoughtless, mechanical, meaningless rules and regulations that were offered to a legalistic God by a legalistic people because they really didn't know him. Look at Mark 7:6 and 7:

And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men."

What traditions? Look up above. It's washing cups and pots and vessels of bronze, and all these other things that are listed here. They had accumulated such a tradition of rules; you've seen whole books of these, haven't you? I think I brought the *Mishnah* last quarter to show how many rules there are, just for Sabbath-keeping. All those rules imply a God who delights in all those rules. A God who would demand that if you carry a burden on your hands this way during the week, Sabbath you must have another way, like on the backs of the hand. A God who would spell out every detail of what it means "on the Sabbath thou shalt not work." So they had 39 kinds of work, and many sub-headings of each of the 39 kinds. And Jesus came along and said, "I never gave you all those rules. You have allowed the devil to take the Ten Commandments, and all the commandments asked for is love for God and love for each other, that's just the price of freedom and peace, that's all I wished for you. You've allowed him to turn those rules into a heavy burden. And you even have to consult the learned doctors lest you may have forgotten some of these rules." He says, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light. I've brought

you good news about the Father” And the prodigal son is his best statement of this. This what God wants of us. It’s not nearly so complicated. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Galatians, #3, recorded March, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/3MMGALATIANS66>

Further Study with Ellen White

The reason why it seems so difficult to win souls for Christ, is that Satan is continually engaged in misrepresenting the character of God to the human mind. Christ came to reveal the Father to the world in his true character, that the false conceptions which men entertained of the divine character might be swept away. {RH, May 31, 1892 par. 9}

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. He has condescended to speak to them with His own voice, to write with His own hand the living oracles. And these blessed words, all instinct with life and luminous with truth, are committed to men as a perfect guide. {PP 503.3}

Rightdoing will bring peace and holy joy. {ML 163.8}

You are invited to come, to ask, to seek, to knock; and you are assured that you will not come in vain. Jesus says, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” Matthew 7:7, 8. {CT 242.1}

Christ illustrates the willingness of God to bless by the willingness of a father to grant the request of his child. He says, “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? Luke 11:11-13. {CT 242.2}

When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man’s best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit. {ML 250.6}

By beholding Jesus we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from character to character. He conforms to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he

attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ makes an end of the curse of sin, and sets the believing soul free from its action and effect. {1SM 395.1}

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. . . . {DA 311.2}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour. {COL 419.6}

It is impossible for finite minds to comprehend the work of redemption. Its mystery exceeds human knowledge; yet he who passes from death to life realizes that it is a divine reality. The beginning of redemption we may know here through a personal experience. Its results reach through the eternal ages. {DA 173.2}

Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of the gifts of heaven and to exclude the rest of God's family in the world. But Christ came to break down every wall of partition. He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth. {MH 25.3}

The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God. No question of policy influenced His movements. He made no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. That which appealed to His heart was a soul thirsting for the waters of life. {MH 25.4}

He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself He presented a lesson appropriate to the time and the circumstances. Every neglect or insult shown by men to their fellow men only made Him more conscious of their need of His divine-human sympathy. He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as the children of God. {MH 25.5}

Christ came to this earth with a message of mercy and forgiveness. He laid the foundation for a religion by which Jew and Gentile, black and white, free and bond, are linked together in one common brotherhood, recognized as equal in the sight of God. The Saviour has a boundless love for every human being. In each one He sees capacity for improvement. With divine energy and hope He greets those for whom He has given His life. In His strength they can live a life rich in good works, filled with the power of the Spirit. {7T 225.4}

There is no caste with God. He ignores everything of the kind. All souls are of value with Him. Laboring for the salvation of the soul is employment worthy of the highest honor. It matters not what may be the form of our labor, or among what class, whether high or low. In God's sight these distinctions will not affect its true worth. The sincere, earnest, contrite soul, however ignorant, is precious in the sight of the Lord. He places His own signet upon men, judging, not by their rank, not by their wealth, not by their intellectual greatness, but by their oneness with Christ. The unlearned, the outcast, the slave, if he has made the most of his opportunities and privileges, if he has cherished the light given him of God, has done all that is required. The world may call him ignorant, but God calls him wise and good, and thus his name stands registered in the books of heaven. God will fit him up to do Him honor, not only in heaven, but on the earth.—*Gospel Workers*, p. 332. (1915) {Ev 566.1}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

It is not possible for the heart in which Christ abides to be destitute of love. If we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We cannot come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity; for in Him who sits upon the throne of the universe, divinity and humanity are combined. Connected with Christ, we are connected with our fellow men by the golden links of the chain of love. Then the pity and compassion of Christ will be manifest in our life. We shall not wait to have the needy and unfortunate brought to us. We shall not need to be entreated to feel for the woes of others. It will be as natural for us to minister to the needy and suffering as it was for Christ to go about doing good. {COL 384.3}

Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God's Holy Spirit. In the depths of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature,

contrary to his education. The “Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9), is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God. {COL 385.1}

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}

During His earthly ministry Christ began to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to all mankind. Though He was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of the Jews with regard to this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate at their tables, and taught in their streets. {AA 19.2}

The Saviour longed to unfold to His disciples the truth regarding the breaking down of the “middle wall of partition” between Israel and the other nations—the truth that “the Gentiles should be fellow heirs” with the Jews and “partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” Ephesians 2:14; 3:6. This truth was revealed in part at the time when He rewarded the faith of the centurion at Capernaum, and also when He preached the gospel to the inhabitants of Sychar. Still more plainly was it revealed on the occasion of His visit to Phoenicia, when He healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman. These experiences helped the disciples to understand that among those whom many regarded as unworthy of salvation, there were souls hungering for the light of truth. {AA 19.3}

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He passed no human being by as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself, He presented a lesson appropriate to the time and the circumstances. Every neglect or insult shown by men to their fellow men only made Him more conscious of their need of His divine-human sympathy. He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them the children of God. {9T 191.2}