

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**Fourth Quarter 2018: *Oneness in Christ***  
**Lesson 2 Causes of Disunity**

**Read for this week's study**

Deuteronomy 28:1–14; Jeremiah 3:14–18; Judges 17:6; 1 Kings 12:1–16; 1 Corinthians 1:10–17; Acts 20:25–31.

**Memory Text**

“ ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding’ ” (Proverbs 9:10, NKJV).

**Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide**

- I. Introduction
- II. “Return, O Backsliding Children”
- III. Right in His Own Eyes
- IV. The Division of the Hebrew Nation
- V. Schism in Corinth
- VI. “Wolves Will Come”
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Facilitator: Jon Paulien**

1. What aspect of the English of Proverbs 9:10 is an accurate reflection of the rules of Hebrew poetry? What was God’s purpose in giving humanity His laws? What is the spiritual value and danger in the various human cultures? How should we relate to western secular culture or the cultures associated with the various world religions? (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14. What blessings would have come to Israel if the people had been obedient to God’s will? Read Jeremiah 3:14-18. What do we learn from God’s call for repentance on the part of Israel? What does that call tell us about God? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Judges 17:6 and 21:25. What do these verses teach about problems that arose within Israel after the conquest of Canaan? How do you get people to give up collective selfishness? What do Judges 2:11-13 and 3:5-7 tell us about the spiritual and social conditions of Israel during the time of the Judges? What are some

contemporary equivalents to “serving other gods.” When people look at Christian churches today what picture of God do they normally see? (Monday’s lesson)

4. Read 1 Kings 12:1-16. What actions by King Rehoboam caused this terrible division among God’s people? According to verses 15 and 24, how would you understand God’s role in the division of Israel? What do the following statements say about the need for wisdom in making the right decisions? (Tuesday’s lesson)
5. According to 1 Corinthians 1:10-17, what seems to have been the cause of disunity in the Corinthian church? Is there any way a church can avoid those kinds of divisions? (Wednesday’s lesson)
6. Read Acts 20:25-31. What did Paul warn the Ephesian elders about? What were they to do to prevent this from happening? Do “false teachers” always know that they are false teachers? Read 2 Timothy 2:14-19 and 3:12-17. According to Paul, how can false teachers be countered and the unity of the church be preserved? (Thursday’s lesson)
7. In the time of the Judges Israel experienced the confusion of anarchy. That led them to desire the tyranny of a king. When it comes to the church, what is the proper center point between these extremes? Where is your church on this scale right now? (Friday’s lesson)
8. What can local church leaders and members do to help prevent strife and cliques in the local church? How does Proverbs 6:16-19 help us to answer this question? (Friday’s lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

This long debate between faith, works and obedience has troubled saints through the years, but it could be so readily resolved if we looked at the biblical word for obedience. This word obedience is *hupakoe*. The first part “hupa” means under. And the second part “akoe” means hearing. The word means literally, “listening under.” *A humble willingness to listen*, and of course if we love and trust God we’ll be willing to listen. It wouldn’t make sense for us to *not* listen to one we love, trust and admire. Now could God’s expectation of our willingness to listen be one hundred percent? Our performance may be weak. We may stumble as we leave our doctor’s office. But a willingness to listen? Is it too much to say, “Don’t cheat there. Let that be one hundred percent!”

If it should seem that God is too demanding in asking for such a relationship, that he expects too much of us, it surely is encouraging to read about the heroes and heroines of faith celebrated in the same chapter of the same book that tells us what faith is. Look at Hebrews 11:31 and following:

By faith the prostitute Rahab escaped the doom of the unbelievers, because she had given the spies a kindly welcome. Time is too short for me to tell the stories of Gideon

[who needed a wet fleece, and a dry one,], Barak, Samson, and Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets. . . . These also, one and all are commemorated for their faith. (NEB)

Is God too demanding? He even holds those people with all their weaknesses, with all their faults and sins; he holds them out to us as people, evidently, who were willing to listen, loved and trusted God and were waiting for him to heal the damage done. And he puts them in Hebrews 11 for our encouragement. 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." 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." 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>*

But there was a third question that needed to be answered. Why is it so important that we understand that God does not execute his sinful children? This had to be answered, too. And so an angel came to strengthen Jesus to go out to Calvary. And there, once again, he answered the first two questions. But this time he was tortured and crucified. By whom? By the Father? Or by most devout group of Sabbath-keeping, tithe-paying, health-reforming, Bible-quoting Adventists the world has ever known? Before they tortured him to death, they even said he had a devil. You see, they obeyed God from fear. Because, as the prophet had said so many times before, they did not really know God.

Look at John 19:31:

Then the Jewish authorities asked Pilate to allow them to break the legs of the men who had been crucified, and to take the bodies down from the crosses. They requested this because it was Friday, and they did not want the bodies to stay on the crosses on the Sabbath, since the coming Sabbath was especially holy. (GNB)

They nailed their Savior to the cross and then rushed home to keep that Sabbath holy, to prove they were God’s true people. That’s the awful result of serving God from fear because you do not know the truth about God. The three questions were answered. Does sin result in death? Indeed, it does! But is it torture and execution at the hands of our gracious God? Indeed, it is not! But what’s so dangerous about misunderstanding this and serving God from fear? The service of fear produces the character of a rebel, and can even turn people who are dedicated to obedience into harsh rebels, and God’s worst enemies! {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>*

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

It is no part of Christ’s mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, who seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederated with evil angels sometimes bring suffering upon their fellow men in

order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. {AA 541.1}

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above. But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace. Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled. {DA 37.2}

Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character, and to make it beautiful with His own glory. {DA 37.3}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings 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. {FLB 84.7}

Wherever there is life, there is increase and growth; in God's kingdom there is a constant interchange—taking in, and giving out; receiving, and returning to the Lord His own. God works with every true believer, and the light and blessings received are given out again in the work which the believer does. Thus the capacity for receiving is increased. As one imparts of the heavenly gifts, he makes room for fresh currents of grace and truth to flow into the soul from the living fountain. Greater light, increased knowledge and blessing, are his. {6T 448.2}

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}

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}

In calling them to His service, God offers them freedom. Obedience to God is liberty from the thralldom of sin, deliverance from human passion and impulse. {TM 247.1}

Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, "Ye shall receive." {AA 564.1}

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}

A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897 par. 11}

Jesus declares that the Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. The Holy Spirit understands man's every necessity. He will bestow upon the earnest seeker that for which he hungers and thirsts. The blessings that God has to bestow are unlimited. We cannot comprehend their height and depth and breadth. All heaven is at the command of those who, realizing their lack of wisdom, come directly to the source of wisdom. To such ones God gives liberally and upbraids not. {HP 294.4}

God is able and willing to bestow upon His servants all the strength they need and to give them the wisdom that their varied necessities demand. He will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him. {AA 242.1}

During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another. {DA 677.2}

This love is the evidence of their discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another." When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. {DA 678.1}

The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. In mind, in purpose, in character, they are one, but not in person. By partaking of the Spirit of God, conforming to the law of God, man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ brings

His disciples into a living union with Himself and with the Father. Through the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind, man is made complete in Christ Jesus. Unity with Christ establishes a bond of unity with one another. This unity is the most convincing proof to the world of the majesty and virtue of Christ, and of His power to take away sin (MS 111, 1903). {5BC 1148.3}

Unity in diversity is God's plan. Among the followers of Christ there is to be the blending of diverse elements, one adapted to the other, and each to do its special work for God. {OHC 169.2}

We are not all fitted to do the same kind of work, but each man's work is designed by God to help make up His plan (RH July 4, 1899). {6BC 1083.4}

The Creator of all ideas may impress different minds with the same thought, but each may express it in a different way, yet without contradiction. The fact that this difference exists should not perplex or confuse us. It is seldom that two persons will view and express truth in the very same way. Each dwells on particular points which his constitution and education have fitted him to appreciate. The sunlight falling upon the different objects gives those objects a different hue. {1SM 22.1}

Through the inspiration of His Spirit the Lord gave His apostles truth, to be expressed according to the development of their minds by the Holy Spirit. But the mind is not cramped, as if forced into a certain mold.—Letter 53, 1900. {1SM 22.2}

God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciple that the Christian becomes like Him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. {DA 251.1}

As we near the time when principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places will be brought into warfare against the truth, when the deceiving power of Satan will be so great that if it were possible he will deceive the very elect, we must have our discernment sharpened by divine enlightenment, that we may know the Spirit that is of God, that we may not be ignorant of Satan's devices. {MR311 49.1}