

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2018: *Oneness in Christ*
Lesson 3 “That They All May Be One”

Read for this week’s study

John 17:1–26; 1 John 5:19; John 13:18–30; John 5:20–23; Mark 9:38–41; Revelation 18:4; 1 John 2:3–6.

Memory Text

“ I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me’ ” (John 17:20, 21, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Jesus Prays for Himself
- III. Jesus Prays for His Disciples
- IV. “For Those Who Will Believe in Me”
- V. Unity Among Christians
- VI. One Faith Shared in Love
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read John 17:20-21. In many translations the two groups here are addressed as “these” and “those.” Identify the two groups Jesus is praying for and consider the implications of this finding. What was Jesus praying for the second group, and what does this mean for us today? (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. Read John 17:1-5. Describe the prayer position that Jesus adopts in this scene. What is the essence of what Jesus is praying for here, and what might it mean for us today? What is the meaning of “glory” in this passage? According to verse 3, how is eternal life obtained? What does it mean to “know God”? What is the difference between knowing about God and truly knowing God? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read John 17:6-19. What is Jesus praying about as His prayer continues? What challenges are they about to face? What does Jesus mean when He says that He is being glorified “in the disciples”? How do we glorify Him in return? See also Revelation 14:7. What does it mean to be “not of this world?” (Monday’s lesson)

4. Read John 17:20-26. What was Jesus' greatest wish for those who would later believe in the gospel message? What role would unity play in the proclamation of the gospel to the world? Does "death to self" play any role in the development of Christian unity? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Read Mark 9:38-41 and John 10:16. What does Jesus' response to John teach us about exclusivism and quick judgments about the wrongness of others? What does this imply about how Seventh-day Adventists should relate to other denominations or even other religions? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. Read 1 John 2:3-6. What does this passage add to John 17:3 with regard to knowing God? How does a personal knowledge of God reveal itself to others in the course of our daily lives? Read John 13:34-35. What new commandment did Jesus give His disciples? What relationship does that have to the idea of unity among Jesus' followers? How does one come to exhibit the self-sacrificing love for others that Jesus revealed? (Thursday's lesson)
7. How can one apply the concepts of "visible" and "invisible" church to Christianity as a whole? How would they apply to specific denominations within Christianity? How do they apply to the concept of unity in the church today? (Friday's lesson)
8. Has your local church worked with other Christians or even other religions on certain issues? How well did that go? How can people of differing beliefs work together without compromising what they believe is God's truth? (Friday's lesson)
9. What are the implications of the following statement? "If God's professed people would receive the light as it shines upon them from His word, they would reach that unity for which Christ prayed." *The Great Controversy*, 379.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

I think when he's saying God's thoughts are so far above ours, that is a reverent recognition that God is infinite. Think of all he knows! We'll never fully understand God; we're mere creatures. And at times we need to be reminded of his infinite superiority. But then it's marvelous that the infinite one would *want* to be known.

All through the Bible he says, "Israel is destroyed because they don't know me." And "I've come to this earth that you may know me." So it's pretty clear God wants to be known. But we shouldn't pretend we're gods who could know everything that he knows.

Lou: So we ought not to use that idea of God's sovereignty, as an excuse to not think about him.

Graham: Yes, and I think where that really comes from is Romans 9, where you have the verse, "Who are you to question God? Who are you to answer back to God?"

And Romans 9, I believe, has been misunderstood by some very saintly people including a notable theologian in reformation days. One needs to really put Romans 9 in the whole context of Romans —certainly in the context of chapters one through nine.

In Romans 1-8, Paul has been saying to his audience (which is made up of both Jews and Gentiles,) “I have great good news for you. God will save all who trust him—whether you are Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female. He’ll save everybody who trusts him.”

And as Paul was developing chapters one through eight, he could sense that certain members of his audience (descended from Abraham) were not taking this too kindly, because they thought that they had a *special relationship* with God. You know, God almost had made a deal with their ancestor. And that’s why they were so concerned with their genealogy and other matters. And when Paul got to the end of chapter eight, he sensed that some in his audience were quite offended. So he turned to them and said, “I sense that some of you don’t like what I’ve said, that God is the kind of God that would save all who trust him. You people who object to this, are you suggesting you would run the universe better than God? Are you saying God cannot save all who trust him? Let me tell you something: God is going to run this universe precisely as he wishes. Just as the potter takes a lump of clay, and makes of the same clay a vessel for honor, and a vessel for dishonor, so God has the right to run his universe any way he likes!” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1 with Lou Venden, “The Conflict In God’s Family” 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/1MMCAG>

Now this raises the significant point, how could it be said that Israel does not know God? Who else knew God so well? Look at all the prophets, and all their marvelous pictures of God. Jeremiah said, “I’m glad to know God as I do.” But the way many people knew God those days was not knowing God in the special, biblical sense. That is, to know God as a friend; to even know God intimately as a husband and a wife know each other. The Bible says: “Adam knew Eve his wife.” And as a result, they didn’t learn each other’s names. They had a baby. Elsewhere, God says of Israel, “Thee only have I known.” He knew all the rest. But he knew *them* in a special way. And when those disappointed saints find that they are not acceptable in the kingdom, and they plead, “Lord, Lord. Open unto us.” He says, “Go away. I never knew you.” Why, he knew the hairs on their head, but he did not know them as friends. And friendship is the very essence of the relationship God wishes to have with his people. If Israel had really known God, they would have been better friends. They would have been jealous for his reputation. And they would have been better people themselves, as were the wonderful prophets in the Old Testament who wrote so well of God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #2, “What Went Wrong In God’s Universe?” 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/2MMCAG>*

You don't find claims in there. You find demonstration, over many centuries of time and certainly under a great variety of circumstances. The very length of the sixty-six books speaks well of our God. The very existence of the Bible says that God is not trying to lead us to trust him without evidence. If God offered us only claims, the Bible could be only a paragraph long. How moving it is to us to realize that the infinite one has chosen to win his family by being a humble teacher. By stooping to meet us where we are, speaking a language we can understand, leading us no faster than we are able to follow, and running grave risks of being misunderstood—especially when we are so noisy that he has to raise his voice to get our attention, and then tell us that he does not like to raise his voice at all! A teacher like that could be trusted. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, "God's Way Of Restoring Trust" recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all unto Me." {DA 626.1}

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory. {DA 758.2}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758.3}

It was a being of wonderful power and glory that had set himself against God. Of Lucifer the Lord says, "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." Ezekiel 28:12. Lucifer had been the covering cherub. He had stood in the light of God's presence. He had been the highest of all created beings, and had been foremost in revealing God's purposes to the universe. After he had sinned, his power to deceive was the more deceptive, and the unveiling

of his character was the more difficult, because of the exalted position he had held with the Father. {DA 758.4}

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

Christ had been sent to earth to represent God in character. Jesus was the Life giver, the Teacher sent of God to provide salvation for a lost world, and to save men in spite of all Satan's temptations and lying deceptions. He himself was the gospel. In his teachings he clearly presented the great plan devised for the redemption of the race. Divinity had united with humanity for the purpose of uniting humanity with divinity, that through Christ man might become a partaker of the divine nature. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." {RH, July 7, 1896 par. 5}

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ's own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world. {6T 55.1}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Therefore he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. . . . {HP 8.2}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world's Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life. . . . {HP 8.3}

The purpose and plan of grace existed from all eternity. Before the foundation of the world it was according to the determinate counsel of God that man should be created and endowed with power to do the divine will. The fall of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent. Redemption was not an after thought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam, but an eternal purpose, suffered to be wrought out for the blessing, not only of this atom of a world, but for the good of all the worlds that God had created. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 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}

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new leaven; that there might be brought to mankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness. {Ed 76.2}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man's well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. {Ed 76.4}

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied. {Ed 77.1}

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men, and yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. {8T 286.3}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {8T 286.4}

In Christ the character of the Father was revealed. As children looked upon His countenance, they saw purity and goodness shining forth from His eyes. In His countenance gentleness, meekness, love, and conscious power were combined. But though every word, every gesture, every expression of His face, betokened His divine supremacy, humility marked His deportment and bearing. He came but for one purpose, and that was the salvation of the lost. {ML 300.4}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. Since sin brought separation between man and his Maker, no man has seen God at any time, except as He is manifested through Christ. {MH 419.1}

Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. Yet not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it was revealed in Christ. {MH 419.3}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {MH 419.4}

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}

We are not to think of God only as a judge, and to forget him as our loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this; for our whole spiritual life will be molded by our conceptions of God's character. {RH, April 5, 1887 par. 10}

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature, that by beholding, we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence. {GC88 555.2}

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. Satan lives, and is active, and every day we need to cry earnestly to God for help and strength to resist him. As long as Satan reigns we shall have self to subdue, besetments to overcome, and there is no stopping place, there is no point to which we can come and say we have fully attained. {1T 340.2}

The leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the

faculties are aroused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. {HP 21.4}

Christ came to this world for no other purpose than to manifest the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. All power and grace were given to Him. His heart was a wellspring of living water, a never-failing fountain, ever ready to flow forth in a rich, clear stream to those around Him. His whole life was spent in pure disinterested benevolence. His purposes were full of love and sympathy. He rejoiced that He could do more for His followers than they could ask or think. {TMK 37.2}

By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. {AG 302.5}

As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan's temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus (RH April 24, 1900). {7BC 943.2}

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. {SD 286.3}

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}

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}

The opinion is held by many that God placed a separating wall between the Hebrews and the outside world; that His care and love, withdrawn to a great extent from the rest of mankind, were centered upon Israel. But God did not design that His people should build up a wall of partition between themselves and their fellow men. The heart of Infinite Love was reaching out toward all the inhabitants of the earth. Though they had rejected Him, He was constantly seeking to reveal Himself to them and make them partakers of His love and grace. His blessing was granted to the chosen people, that they might bless others. {PP 368.1}

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. {9T 191.1}

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}

Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness, and alienation from God, that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion. {GC88 390.1}

A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God. {MB 128.3}

To take people right where they are, whatever their position, whatever their condition, and help them in every way possible—this is gospel ministry. . . . {MM 238.1}

Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1076.2}

Christ brings all true believers into complete oneness with Himself, even the oneness which exists between Him and His Father. The true children of God are bound up with one another and with their Saviour. They are one with Christ in God. {SD 293.5}

The love of God alone can open and expand the heart, and give to love and sympathy a breadth and height that is without measure. Those who love Jesus will love all the children of God. The sense of personal infirmities and imperfections will lead the human agent to look away from self to Christ; and the Saviour's love will break down every cold, Pharisaical barrier, it will banish all harshness and selfishness, and there will be a blending of soul with soul, even with those who are opposite in temperament. {OHC 183.3}

Recommended Reading:

“What Was Secured by the Death of Christ” – *The Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1889

“Surpassing Love Revealed in His Plan” – *The Signs of the Times*, December 15, 1914

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