

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2018: *Oneness in Christ*
Lesson 13 Church Final Restoration of Unity

Read for this week's study

John 14:1–3, Isaiah 11:1–10, Revelation 21:1–5, 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, Revelation 22:1–5, Isaiah 35:4–10.

Memory Text

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Certainty of Christ's Return
- III. The Promise of Restoration
- IV. Resurrection and Restored Relationships
- V. A New Earth for the Redeemed
- VI. Life on the New Earth
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In this final lesson, we look at this promise and what it means for Christian unity. Our oneness in Christ is often challenged by our human limitations and weaknesses. But we will no longer need to seek for solutions to our fragmentation, because there will be no fragmentation. At the Second Advent, we will be one with the Lord, finally reunited and forming one restored family.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Wide diversity, models of authority, differing cultures, have made it nearly impossible in our society to achieve fairness to all, especially for those on the margins and for the oppressed. We are assured that in the new earth, “righteousness” will dwell. (2 Peter 3:13) What significance does that have for us today?
3. Sunday's lesson emphasizes the certainty of Christ's return. What is the significance of the Second Coming of Christ in: a) the early Church; b) 19th century Christianity; c) today? Can we see and explain the difference it makes in our everyday lives?

4. Why are the promises of the restoration of the environment (Monday's lesson) and restoration of relationships (Tuesday's lesson) so important to what God is trying to accomplish throughout history? Why are both important? Why is keeping a balance between them so important? What happens when one is emphasized at the expense of the other? How can the individual and communal aspects of this restoration work together?
5. Why is focus on the new earth (Wednesday's lesson) and life on the new earth (Thursday's lesson) important for our understanding of who God is and how he runs his universe?
6. What kind of universe-wide unity will be achieved in the hereafter? How does the fact that Christ will surrender his use of authority (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) influence our understanding of how God operates?
7. What is it that makes "heaven" a desirable place for the redeemed? When this war is finally over and God has achieved the desired unity the sad story of sin and rebellion will never be repeated. How is this assured?
8. Isn't the Second Coming the "blessed hope" which resolves everything? Why are the "leaves of the tree of life for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2) needed after the second coming of Jesus [and the millennium]?
9. God ultimately wins, not because of his might, authority, or getting rid of his enemies, but because he wins the minds and hearts of his people and kills the lie about his character (Revelation 15:3, 4). Why is this significant?
10. This is how the Bible ends; what is the significance of all this for our mission and how we witness today?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The second coming seemed to be indefinitely delayed. They thought he would come around 50 A.D., and Paul had to tell them, "No, not yet", in his letter to Thessalonica. There were still more things to happen. By the 90's—what had gone wrong that Jesus had not yet returned? And besides this, there were heresies in the church. Some were even teaching that Christ had not really come in human form. He had not really suffered and really died. He had faked it all. They're called the *Docetists*, who taught he just pretended to do it. And then there was great opposition, and serious persecution. The apostles were all dead, save one. And he was the elderly John, now a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos. What good news was there, to encourage the early Christians?

And you could count on God when things were that bleak, to send a message of encouragement and enlightenment and explanation to his people. He surely wouldn't send a book of mysteries and dates and schedules of events that they could not possibly understand.

Rather, that sixty-sixth book that he did send, the book of Revelation (which means clarification, not mystification), that sixty-sixth book is an invitation to discouraged early Christians to look a little higher—to take the *larger view* of things. To see how they've all been caught up in a vast great controversy that affects the whole universe! And that it's a controversy over God's own character and government. And then to read on and see that God has already won this war and the angels all agree with him—to see that this is the good news. And then to read on and realize that God is inviting *us* to join in the celebration; and then to go out to the world and invite all others who are willing to listen, to join in God's victory in the war. And then we Christians might not seem so much on the defensive all the time; we have good news to tell. There's no way God and his side can lose. And should we not *join the winning side?* is the invitation in that sixty-sixth book.

And the book also says that you can count on God to wait until this truth about him—this good news about his character and government—has been spread all over the world. Because God is the kind of person who will wait until his children have had an opportunity to understand the issues in the war; and to be ready for the awesome events the Bible describes as taking place before Jesus' return. To see and to present the plan of salvation in the larger setting of the great controversy over the character and government of God is, I believe, the highest privilege of God's friends on this planet today. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, "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>*

Lou: Our question tonight, "How Soon Will the Conflict Be Over?" seems to be tied in very closely with the second coming of Christ. I'm wondering, is that really the end of the conflict? Is that what you're saying this evening? Or aren't there some other very important events such as the millennium, the destruction of the wicked, that are part of what we might call the conflict?

Graham: That's true. There are major events yet to come after. But the second coming really does mark the end of the essential conflict, because the conflict is not so much a great war in which the powers of Heaven are arrayed against the powers of earth and God will eventually move in and bring it to an end. The essential conflict is in the minds of his children, of angels and of men. And the second coming means it's all over. The loyal are committed forever to loyalty and the disloyal are committed forever to their rebellious rejection. So this is the conflict that really counts.

And that has many significant implications. This is the important conflict that takes place in our minds. We've talked about how the most essential thing is for God to demonstrate the truth about himself. And some will object, "Well, that doesn't make *us* very important." No, if his

demonstration does not lead some of us to conviction in our minds, he's failed. So we are not just pawns. He is trying to win us. We are very much involved in this conflict. This conflict is being fought in the minds of his own children. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #19 with Lou Venden, "How Soon Will the Conflict be Over?" recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/19MMCAG>*

But on the more serious level, Jesus made it plain, "I've come that you may know the Father, because to know him is life eternal. And if only you knew the truth about my Father it would set you free. And all these rules and regulations that deprive you of your freedom, and make life so burdensome, I didn't give those to you. Away with them!" Wouldn't you think they'd be pleased?

Well, the closest parallel I can think of is the Minneapolis General Conference in 1888, when a marvelous explanation was given about the law being added as an emergency measure. Not the way God wants to run his family for eternity, but when there's misbehavior in the family he will tell us, "Please, stop it! Don't hurt yourselves by doing it any more. If you're not concerned about hurting yourselves, then let me tell you I am displeased when you do this and I will punish you," and so on." God says, "I do not wish to run my family that way."

And that marvelous message in Minneapolis was rejected by many with such feeling that Ellen White said that if Jesus had appeared—as he has just now in the New Testament—if he had appeared before the delegates at that General Conference in Minneapolis in 1888, many of the delegates would have rejected him with the same stubbornness with which Jesus was rejected in the 1st Century. Then we're still capable of doing it, and I sense even now, in some theological meetings, when you begin to talk about the fact that all God asks of us is trust, as Peter said to the jailer at Philippi and the whole Bible is a record of the evidence that God can be trusted, people don't just oppose that. They become very active in their opposition. And it almost seems that history is repeating itself. And you wonder why we don't like this.

Understanding what God has asked of us in the plan of salvation, in the setting of this great controversy over the character of God, the whole substance of the good news is that God has shown himself to be infinitely worthy of our trust; and if we choose to trust him, God can and will save all who trust him. That's all he asks of us. Abraham trusted God, and God said, "That's good; you are my friend. You'll be with me in my kingdom. All my friends will be there."

And then, when some are pictured by Jesus as saying at the end, "Lord, Lord, open unto us," he says, "Go away. You never were my friends."—which is the meaning of "I never knew you." I know your name. I know how many hairs there are on your head. But we never were friends. And some feel that's oversimplifying it. That's the most demanding requirement you can come

up with. Do we really trust God wholeheartedly? Are we willing to listen, and accept correction, and whatever needs to be done? Well, if so, like the thief on the cross, God could say to us, “Don’t give up that trust, that humble willingness to listen, because if you stay that way, I can heal you, and you will be with me in the kingdom.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

You remember 2 Peter says that in the end “the very elements of our planet will melt with fervent heat.” And so when it’s all over, and God’s people are there in the New Jerusalem, and God opens the gates and welcomes us back to Eden. Who wants to live on a planet where the very elements have melted with fervent heat? It’s going to need to be recreated.

And I don’t know how God will do this, but, skillful teacher that he is, wouldn’t it be just like him to say, “Would you like to see how I did it the first time? You know, you’ve been debating this ever since day one, two, three, four, five, six.” Can’t you see it all over again, maybe? We don’t have a text for this. But then on Friday, Eden is restored; Ellen White’s insight into this is extraordinary. She says that Adam looks out and even sees the vines that he used to train with his own hands. Now why would God do such a thing? Or, as you know God, wouldn’t he do just such a thing? Adam would enjoy it, so he would do it. And so God looks on his schedule of creation events and says, “Well, now, next I must create a man and a woman. What shall we call them this time?” No, there’s no need. All he has to do now is open the gates and welcome his children home.

And then, as we go out into our beautiful world, described in so many places in the Bible as beyond description, what if God were to say, “Tomorrow is the seventh day on this planet. Would you mind, would you feel it was at all arbitrary, would it be an infringement on your freedom, would I seem legalistic if I were to suggest that we spend the next 24 hours celebrating and remembering?” Can you imagine any Sabbath in the history of the universe like that one? It would be incredible. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Mark, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/53MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/54MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. It comes through the gentleness of the inspiration of His word, through the inward working of His Spirit, the fellowship of the soul with

Him who is its life. The greatest manifestation of its power is seen in human nature brought to the perfection of the character of Christ. {7T 143.2}

In the earth made new, the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Isaiah 65:21, 22. {PK 730.2}

God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal home of the redeemed. {AH 540.3}

There will be open to the student, history of infinite scope and of wealth inexpressible. Here, from the vantage ground of God's word, the student is afforded a view of the vast field of history and may gain some knowledge of the principles that govern the course of human events. But his vision is still clouded, and his knowledge incomplete. Not until he stands in the light of eternity will he see all things clearly. {Ed 304.2}

Then will be opened before him the course of the great conflict that had its birth before time began, and that ends only when time shall cease. The history of the inception of sin; of fatal falsehood in its crooked working; of truth that, swerving not from its own straight lines, has met and conquered error—all will be made manifest. The veil that interposes between the visible and the invisible world will be drawn aside, and wonderful things will be revealed. {Ed 304.3}

There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul. {Ed 307.4}

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. We shall share the treasures gained through ages upon ages spent in contemplation of God's handiwork. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations. "Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20) will be, forever and forever, the impartation of the gifts of God. {Ed 307.5}

There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions

realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. {GC 677.2}

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love. {GC 678.3}

And the education begun in this life will be continued in the life to come. Day by day the wonderful works of God, the evidences of His wisdom and power in creating and sustaining the universe, the infinite mystery of love and wisdom in the plan of redemption, will open to the mind in new beauty. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9. Even in this life we may catch glimpses of His presence and may taste the joy of communion with Heaven, but the fullness of its joy and blessing will be reached in the hereafter. Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain. {PP 602.1}

Our lifework here is a preparation for the life eternal. The education begun here will not be completed in this life; it will be going forward through all eternity—ever progressing, never completed. More and more fully will be revealed the wisdom and love of God in the plan of redemption. The Saviour, as He leads His children to the fountains of living waters, will impart rich stores of knowledge. And day by day the wonderful works of God, the evidences of His power in creating and sustaining the universe, will open before the mind in new beauty. In the light that shines from the throne, mysteries will disappear, and the soul will be filled with astonishment at the simplicity of the things that were never before comprehended. {MH 466.2}

Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now we know in part; but then we shall know even as also we are known. {MH 466.3}

There Christ, the heavenly Teacher, will lead His people to the tree of life, and He will explain to them the truths they could not in this life understand. In that future life His people will gain the higher education in its completeness. {HP 216.5}

It will take the whole of eternity for man to understand the plan of redemption. It will open to him line upon line; here a little and there a little (MS 21, 1895). {6BC 1115.15}

Recommended Reading: *The Great Controversy*, chapter 42 "The Controversy Ended"

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