

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**First Quarter 2019: *The Book of Revelation***  
**Lesson 6 The Sealed People of God**

**Read for this week's study**

Revelation 7; 2 Peter 3:9–14; Deuteronomy 8:11–17; Revelation 14:4, 5, 12; 17:5; Romans 3:19–23.

**Memory Text**

“ ‘These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb’ ” (Revelation 7:14, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. Restraining the Winds
- III. The Sealed People of God
- IV. The Great Multitude
- V. Those Who Follow the Lamb
- VI. Salvation to Our God and the Lamb
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Facilitator: Jon Paulien**

1. Read Revelation 6:17. How is this question answered in chapter seven? Is it OK to have more than one answer to a question like this? What are the implications of such a finding? What is the role of chapter 7 within the seven seals as a whole? How is chapter seven like 10:1-11:14 and 14:1-5? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Revelation 7:1-3. Be prepared to describe what John sees in your own words. What do the winds represent and how long are the angels supposed to restrain the winds? What will happen when the sealing is concluded? Is 2 Peter 3:9 relevant to Revelation seven? Do you think we live in a time of restraint or lack of restraint? If God is the one restraining, who is the one doing all the damage? When God acts in judgment why does He do so? What does that tell us about God? (Sunday's lesson)
3. Read Revelation 7:4-8. What is the number of God's sealed people? What is the meaning of that specific number? Is the number literal or symbolic? Military imagery is common in the Bible, even in the New Testament. How appropriate is the military language of Revelation as a revelation of Jesus Christ? (Monday's lesson)

4. Read Revelation 7:9-14. What group of saints does John see at this point? How are they described and where do they come from? What is the meaning of their statements before God's throne? This group has maintained its faith and faithfulness in a time of trouble. How do we maintain faith and faithfulness in times of ease and prosperity? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Read Revelation 14:4-5. What are the chief characteristics of the 144,000 in this passage? How are these characteristics related to the description of the end-time saints in Revelation 14:12? What does it mean that the 144,000 have not been defiled with women (see Revelation 17:5)? Is this to be taken literally? If not, what would be the meaning of spiritual fornication? Revelation has a lot to say about false religion. What is the core element of false religion? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. Read Revelation 14:5 along with 2 Peter 3:14. Revelation describes God's end-time people as "without fault." In what sense is such a state achievable? Is it possible to "live at peace" while striving for perfection? Do Genesis 17:1 and Job 1:1 help us understand this concept? (Thursday's lesson)
7. An important characteristic of the 144,000 end-time saints is the singing of a new song (Revelation 14:3). What does this mean? How does a spiritual walk with God stay fresh? What, in experience, is the difference between knowing about God and truly knowing God? (Friday's lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

My understanding of the seven last plagues is that they would differ very much from the ten plagues of Egypt. The ten plagues of Egypt were particularly designed to expose the impotence of the Egyptian deities and maybe win some of the Egyptians from their frogs and their flies to worship the true God, and some did. And they went out with the Israelites.

Now as you say, probation is closed. Everyone has made up his mind. And that's when God gives people up and he ceases to protect. He ceases to restrain as in Thessalonians. And when God ceases to hold the four winds, think of all these pictures in the Bible and Revelation.

When he ceases to restrain, and when the adversary is given a free hand as he was in the days of Job then all hell breaks loose. And I believe the seven last plagues are simply the dreadful things that happen when God ceases to restrain and ceases to protect. I do not see his hand in them at all. {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)

And this is a time for grown-ups here in Revelation, if we believe we are down in this period at the end of chapter 14 when the devil's campaign will rise to its greatest crescendo. Is this a time to be babes in the truth or to be like Job? Well, it says they're sealed. Maybe we should pause on that sealing and the mark of the beast. You see, if you say the seal is the Sabbath and the mark of the beast is Sunday then everybody who keeps the seventh day is going to be saved and everybody who keeps Sunday is going to be lost. True?

Oh, how Ellen White warned against that, and we only need to read back in the New Testament to see it. Seventh-day Sabbath observers crucified Christ. So there is much more to it than that. So when in Revelation 7, the one who is reading out loud talked about the sealing, the second coming is delayed until God's people are sealed, they must have looked around the room to see if any were sealed and there was nothing visible. What does it mean to be sealed? And if they knew their Bibles, they might remember Ephesians which says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit, by whom we're sealed." But there wasn't long to think about this because the reader was going on. But maybe on the way home they would say to each other, "Do you think you are sealed? When God's people are sealed then he will come. Have we allowed the Holy Spirit to do his work? What work?" Who wrote the most detailed description of the work of the Holy Spirit in his Gospel? Matthew, Mark, Luke or John? It's John.

You remember Jesus talked at length about sending the Holy Spirit who would come to guide us into the truth, and settle us into the truth, and convince us of the truth. The idea could develop in the minds of the early Christians that to be sealed, to receive the seal of God in the forehead where one does one's thinking, is to allow the Holy Spirit to do the work Jesus sent him to do in the mind, which would be to settle us into the truth. Not to introduce us to the truth, but to so settle us into the truth that we cannot be moved. And Ellen White went through some such thinking in her mind, because you've read her definition of the sealing. She says, "To receive the seal of God does not mean to receive any sign or mark that can be seen. It means rather to be so settled into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, that one cannot be moved."

Now what truth would one want to be settled into? Which day is the Sabbath? The people who crucified Christ were settled on that. Tithing? Health reforming? I don't make light of all those things, but those are not the issue. What was the issue when the war began up in heaven? What did the angels argue over? I couldn't help thinking of this when I was teaching the Sabbath School Lesson up at Soquel campmeeting this Sabbath. Wasn't that a rare lesson?

Abortion, gambling, race relations, and relations between men and women. Did the angels ever argue over those issues? How about gambling? One third of the angels gambled. And they lost. So gambling has really been a prevailing weakness, hasn't it, of God's children? To believe without evidence. "What is the truth?" was their only question. The truth about what?

That's all! All they argued about was God and his government, and what he wanted of his children. I believe the great controversy will end just as it began. The good news is the truth in the great controversy, the truth about God. The errors, the opposition, they are all about God. And all the details are just reflections about this basic position that we take. Are we on God's side, or not, in the great controversy? Are we so settled into the truth about God "both intellectually and spiritually" that we could not be moved? Could you name anybody in the Bible other than the Lord himself, who was so settled into the truth about God, both intellectually he could talk about it, and spiritually he would stake his life on it, that he could not be moved? Job, that's what the whole book is about. And the three theologians came and said, "God is like this." He said, "He is not. He is like this. I can't make sense out of what is happening to me but he could slay me and I'd still trust him." I believe Job was fully sealed and settled. If we were as settled as Job was, we'd be ready to pass through the time of trouble and the Lord could come. {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)

I think I'd rather stay with John's picture—I heard the number and then I looked and I couldn't count them. I'd rather leave it open like that. What kind of people they are is made very plain. How many? Well, the prophet couldn't count them. And yet it's only a remnant, always in the minority. Though as I've mentioned before if you ever feel very much in the minority it's only on this planet, isn't it? Throughout the rest of the universe the majority are loyal to God. So, when you feel alone, realize you're on the larger side in the great controversy. Most have chosen to stay loyal, though we're in the minority on this planet. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 11, recorded January, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/21MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/22MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

So I believe we're waiting for people who can survive and bear a witness. Yes, but just quickly, isn't perfection suggestive of obedience to law, and that's where the rub sometimes comes. All right, let's go that route. Revelation 14:12: "The remnant keep the commandments of God." Half way? No reservations—they keep the commandments of God. Well, doesn't that sound legalistic to obey God's commandments? No, look at them again. Moses said to keep the commandments is to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself, and you shall not hate your neighbor in your heart. That's not Jesus, that's Moses, in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. And Jesus only repeated it when he said the same thing. And Paul only repeated it when he said, "Love is the fulfilling of the law. He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled all law."

So then, perfection is perfect obedience to the law of God, which means being perfectly loving. All right, what does it mean to love, since that has so many other connotations? And Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 13 because they really were confused about love in that church. A man had even married his father's wife, you remember, which he said, even the heathen don't do. There was immorality in the Corinthian church. So Paul said, "Let me tell you about love. Love is always patient, it's always kind, it's never arrogant, it's never rude, it never insists on having its own way, it's never even irritable." To behave like that is to keep God's commandments. Well, who wants to behave any other way than that? Besides, isn't that the way a grown-up behaves? Therefore, to keep God's commandments is to be grown-up, to be mature, to be perfect. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation – Perfection, Requirement or Generous Offer? Recorded December, 1983, San Diego, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMPERFECT> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMPERFECT> (Part 2)

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

Determined to efface the image of God in man, Satan works with an intensity of effort to hide God from view. Not openly does he work, but secretly, mingling the human and the divine, the spurious and the genuine, so seeking to bring confusion and distress. But in proportionate power divine mercy is revealed to counteract this wicked working, and bring to light the enemy's hidden purposes. {TDG 308.5}

The Lord does not leave His wounded and bruised sheep to the power of Satan to be torn in pieces. He is ever strengthening His own when they are weak. He delivers the tried and tempted ones from the enemy's power. The Lord Jesus never forsakes any soul that puts his trust in Him. {UL 150.4}

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}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures. {COL 60.1}

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.

Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming (MS 173, 1902). {4BC 1161.6}

Where there is not only a belief in God's Word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. {AG 137.5}

It is faith that familiarizes the soul with the existence and presence of God; and when we live with an eye single to His glory, we discern more and more the beauty of His character. Our souls become strong in spiritual power, for we are breathing the atmosphere of heaven, and, realizing that God is at our right hand, we shall not be moved.... We should live as in the presence of the Infinite One.... {OHC 324.5}

Divine wisdom will order the steps of those who put their trust in the Lord. Divine love will encircle them, and they will realize the presence of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. {OHC 324.6}

The Redeemer of the world clothed His divinity with humanity, that He might reach humanity; for it took the divine and the human to bring into the world the salvation that was needed by fallen man. Divinity needed humanity that humanity might afford a channel of communication between God and man. Man needs a power out of and above himself to restore him to the likeness of God; but because he needs divine aid, it does not make human activity unessential. Faith on the part of man is required; for faith works by love and purifies the soul. Faith lays hold upon the virtue of Christ. The Lord does not design that human power should be paralyzed; but by cooperating with God, the power of man may be efficient for good. God does not design that our will should be destroyed; for it is through this very attribute that we are to accomplish the work He would have us to do both at home and abroad. He has given to every man his work; and every true worker sheds forth light to the world, because he is united with God and Christ and heavenly angels in the grand work of saving the lost. From divine association he becomes more and more intelligent in working the works of God. In working out what divine grace works in, the believer becomes spiritually great. He who works according to his entrusted ability will become a wise builder for the Master; for he is under the apprenticeship to Christ, learning to work the works of God. {1SM 375.2}

The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so 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 roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. {COL 98.3}

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.

{COL 311.4}

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}

Christ has made every provision for us to be strong. He has given us His Holy Spirit, whose office is to bring to our remembrance all the promises that Christ has made, that we may have peace and a sweet sense of forgiveness. If we will but keep our eyes fixed on the Saviour and trust in His power, we shall be filled with a sense of security; for the righteousness of Christ will become our righteousness. {ML 45.5}

But when we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure. {COL 363.1}

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; for he is the source of every right impulse. {OW, December 1, 1909 par. 10}

God desires us to reach the standard of perfection made possible for us by the gift of Christ. He calls upon us to make our choice on the right side, to connect with heavenly agencies, to adopt principles that will restore in us the divine image. In His written Word and in the great book of nature He has revealed the principles of life. It is our work to obtain a knowledge of these principles, and by obedience to cooperate with Him in restoring health to the body as well as to the soul. . . . {AG 103.5}

Those who believe on Christ and obey His commandments are not under bondage to God's law; for to those who believe and obey, His law is not a law of bondage, but of liberty. {HP 146.5}

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}

Our sanctification is the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is the fulfillment of the covenant God has made with those who bind themselves up with Him, to stand with Him, His Son, and His Spirit in holy fellowship. {7BC 908.11}

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}

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}

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us. {DA 668.3}

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human

inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

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}

Christ came to the world that we might become new creatures, created after the similitude of his own character; that we might have purity like the purity of God, have perfection like his perfection. In the work of regeneration, the original loveliness begins to be restored. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted to the soul, and the image of the divine begins to shine forth. “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” It is plainly declared that a change takes place in the character of the human agent. {ST, August 21, 1893 par. 3}

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}

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. {COL 333.1}

The entrance of God’s word is the application of divine truth to the heart, purifying and refining the soul through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The faculties devoted unreservedly to God, under the guidance of the divine Spirit, develop steadily and harmoniously. Devotion and piety establish so close a relation between Jesus and His disciples that the Christian becomes like Him. Through the power of God, his weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. He becomes a person of sound principle, clear perception, and reliable, well-balanced judgment. Having a connection with God, the source of light and understanding, his views, unbiased by his own preconceived opinions, become broader, his discernment more penetrative and farseeing. The knowledge of God, the understanding of His revealed will, as far as human minds can grasp it, will, when received into the character, make efficient men. {CT 37.3}