

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2019: *The Book of Revelation*

Lesson 11 The Seven Last Plagues

Read for this week's study

Revelation 15:1; 7:1–3; 14:9, 10; 16:1–12; 17:1; Daniel 5; Revelation 16:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12.

Memory Text

“ ‘Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested’ ” (Revelation 15:4, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Meaning of the Seven Last Plagues
- III. The Outpouring of the Last Plagues
- IV. Drying Up the Euphrates River
- V. Satan's Last Great Deception
- VI. Gathering for the Final Battle
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Revelation 11:18 and 15:1. What is the significance of the connection between the two passages? How does Revelation 15:1 function as a summary introduction of the seven last plagues? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Revelation 15:1 and compare with Revelation 7:1-3 and 14:9-10. How do the plagues on Egypt during the Exodus serve as a backdrop for the plagues in chapter 16? How does that parallel inform us regarding the meaning and purpose of the seven last plagues? Read Revelation 15:5-8 and compare with Exodus 40:34-35 and 1 Kings 8:10-11. What does the fact that no one can enter the temple suggest about the timing of the seven last plagues? What is the purpose of the plagues if they do not to lead anyone to repentance? What does the fact that the plagues have been delayed this long tell us about God's character? (Sunday's lesson)
3. What do you think was God's purpose for the plagues on Egypt (Exodus 7-11)? Read Revelation 16:1-11. What is happening in these verses and how is it portrayed? Why

- does God bring about or allow the plagues if no one changes their mind as a result? How does one learn to trust God even in the midst of suffering? (Monday's lesson)
4. Read Revelation 16:12, 17:1 and 17:15. What does the symbol of the Euphrates River stand for? What is the significance of the drying up of the Euphrates in the context of the seven last plagues? (Tuesday's lesson)
 5. Read Revelation 16:12-14. Who are the kings from the east? What is the role of the froglike demons in the preparation for the final battle? What is their relationship to the three angels of Revelation 14? Is verse 12 earlier or later than verses 13 and 14? What is the relationship of Revelation 16:13 to Revelation 13? (Wednesday's lesson)
 6. Read Revelation 16:16. What is the meaning of Armageddon and how will the battle of Armageddon be fought? Is the battle literal or spiritual? (Thursday's lesson)
 7. Read Revelation 16:14-16. Notice how verses 14 and 16 fit nicely together without verse 15. Why is verse 15 inserted where it is? What are the implications of this verse for the battle of Armageddon? Note the key-word parallels between 16:15 and the message to Laodicea (Revelation 3:17-18). What are the implications of these verbal parallels for our understanding of the seven churches and the final crisis of earth's history? (Friday's lesson)
 8. White garments in Revelation symbolize loyalty and faithfulness to Christ (Revelation 3:4-5; 19:7-9). Read Revelation 7:14. What does washing one's robes in the blood of the Lamb mean and how does one do that in everyday experience? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

How do you understand the ten plagues of Egypt? Was this vengeance because they'd abused his people? Was God just giving them up to the consequences of their misbehavior as in say, the seven last plagues, where probation having ended, God just sadly gives people up to reap the consequences of their rebellious choices? Is it not significant that in a country where almost everything was worshiped, each plague was directed toward one of the Egyptian deities—almost all of them. For example, they worshiped the river Nile. How would it be to kneel by the Nile that night, holding your nose between thumb and forefinger, because it stank, it says, and pray, "Dear god Nile, look after us this night." And the Nile seemed to be having enough problems of its own. And then the flies and the frogs, and all those other things. You know, the Egyptians worshiped crocodiles, even. Beetles. And Romans 1 says it's a law that we become like the thing we worship and admire. And if you worship those things, it has a devastating effect on you.

But the Egyptians believed that these "gods" they worshiped were stronger than the God of Israel, so why would anybody want to go out with the Israelites? Why should they let the

Israelites go? Their God was impotent. My understanding would be, that the ten plagues were designed in the most effective manner at that time, to demonstrate the impotence of the Egyptian “gods”, so that, though not for the best reason, but a good beginning one, not only the children of Israel, but even many of the Egyptians, would be willing to leave. You know, many Egyptians went, because they said, “Your God must be stronger than ours, and we want to be on the winning team.” And they left with them. Some caused them a lot of trouble to come. Some of them recommended the golden calf, you remember. It was one of the mixed multitude that recommended that.

Could you, having killed frogs all day, and swept them up into stinking piles, that night gather your family around, and pray, “Dear lord frog, bless Mommy; bless Daddy. Help us to be like you.” After a while, a child would be bound to say something, “Mommy and Daddy, how come we are praying to these frogs?” It doesn’t make sense, does it! {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Exodus*, recorded October, 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/3MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Well the picture here is, the angels pour out God’s wrath, but God’s wrath is his giving people up to reap the natural consequences of their rebellious choice. You take the plague of Armageddon for example. You notice that the world is gathered together for this battle. You mean they are not gathered until the sixth plague? They are already being gathered now aren’t they? So the circumstances that reach their climax under the sixth plague are well developed at the present time. How about the conditions on our planet? They seem to be described by the first plagues.

It almost looks like environmental decay doesn’t it. That is well under way. Ellen White has eloquent ways of saying that “the devil imparts a deadly taint to the air.” She speaks of his actually bringing sickness on the human race and then coming as the great medical missionary to heal the sick. And they say, “Truly Christ has come.” You see how he could do that? And I see all that under the seven last plagues where God has “poured out his wrath”, which equals he has given people up to reap the natural consequences of their own rebellious choices. They do not desire his protection which also suggests to me the reality of the protection we all enjoy right now. If we were not protected the devil would be treating us as he did Job. We would be losing everything. And it’s interesting that the devil could do anything to Job except take his life. Have we not said that will happen to the group at the end? He can do anything to them except

take their lives. There is no place to hide in the end. When God ceases to protect, all hell will break loose.

And some saints will say, “Oh that is good, God is giving the wicked what they deserve.” Well, they are not ready to pass through the time of trouble because they don’t understand his wrath yet. They are the kind who would serve him from fear and they are not ready to witness the awful destruction at the end because they’ll think that it is God doing it. There are altogether too many people who even look forward to this as the fulfillment of that precious promise, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” How many saints are looking forward to when the wicked are going to get what is coming to them? If any of that is left in us we are not safe to have around in the hereafter. That has to go. God says, “Yes, leave it to me to exercise vengeance, because they’re my children. And if you’ll let me handle them in my way I might win some. Would you mind if I did?” You say, “No, I’m counting on vengeance.” And God says, “That is why you better leave it up to me because I might win them when I discipline them and punish them.” It is much safer to leave the vengeance to God because they are his children too, and I might not feel that warmly toward brother Jones at the moment. I just want plain, old vengeance. And God says, “Yes he is bad and he has treated you terribly. Would you forgive me if I won him?” We have to be willing to let him do that.

And so God says, “Please leave all this up to me because they are all my children.” I believe in the end, this is God giving his children up because they will not let him help them, they will not let him protect them, and he gives them up to the awful consequences, and we don’t see God beating them up in the end.

That’s not a time of discipline, it is too late. He’s just giving them up to the consequences. And then they die at the second coming and they arise at the third coming. They are not aware that they have been asleep. Life has gone on without a break. And there they gather together to assault the New Jerusalem, making very plain that they really were rebels at heart. And there is Christ, the New Jerusalem, the saints, there’s the whole scene in front of them and it doesn’t win a one of them. God can turn to the family and say, “Would it have helped to give them any more time? In fact do you see anyone responding out there outside the New Jerusalem? Do you remember Uncle Bill who said if only you would give him some evidence he would come across? Take a look out there. He can see us here, here’s evidence. If Uncle Bill responds I’ll stop everything and let him in.” But nobody responds. Nobody responds. {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)

Graham: If he won the victory on Calvary, why not terminate right afterward? Look what has happened these last two thousand years and happening in the news this week. Everything God does speaks eloquently to his purposes, and so we ask the question: “How does this?” There are things yet to be demonstrated—not about God and his government. Satan has never been given an entirely free hand to run things his way. And we are going to see this. When the seven angels pour out the seven vials of God’s wrath, we understand from Romans, and Hosea, and the cross, that God’s wrath is his giving people up, handing them over. The Spirit ceases to restrain. The four angels no longer hold the four winds of the final events. And Satan will have a free hand. And the universe and his own followers will see how he will run things, when he can run it his own way. And all hell will break loose at that time.

Lou: So it really is a matter, again, of demonstration.

Graham: I think it demonstrates something else also. I wouldn’t blame the angels for wondering if we rebels could really be convinced of the truth the way they are. They are all ready to see the seven last plagues and not interpret them as vengeance. They are also prepared to see the wicked consumed and not be made afraid of God. They wonder if we are. And so they wonder, would it be possible for a group of us really pygmy rebels that we are, this far from the Garden of Eden, would it be possible for the truth to heal us to the point that like Job, we could pass through that awful time of trouble and not be led away from God or be led to think of him as vengeful during the seven last plagues—and so be ready to see the final destruction without being afraid? See, one generation will be alive to see the Lord come. And that generation can really speak eloquently of God’s power to heal, the power of the truth to restore the damage done. This last generation has a great privilege of bringing honor to God. He says, “*I can heal with the truth.* I can actually restore those people, and they can believe me just the way you angels do.” That would be a high privilege. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #17 with Lou Venden, “Satan’s Final Effort to Deceive” recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/17MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

In the person of Christ we behold the eternal God engaged in an enterprise of boundless mercy toward fallen man. {FLB 98.3}

Christ came to this world to show that by receiving power from on high, man can live an unsullied life. . . . {FLB 98.4}

He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. . . . He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before

them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as the children of God. {FLB 98.6}

Go to God for yourselves, pray for divine enlightenment, that you may know that you do know what is truth, that when the wonderful miracle-working power of Satan shall be displayed, and the enemy shall come as an angel of light, you may distinguish between the genuine work of God and the imitative work of the powers of darkness. {RH, December 24, 1889 par. 11}

As we near the end of time, falsehood will be so mingled with truth, that only those who have the guidance of the Holy Spirit will be able to distinguish truth from error. We need to make every effort to keep the way of the Lord. We must in no case turn from His guidance to put our trust in man. The Lord's angels are appointed to keep strict watch over those who put their faith in the Lord, and these angels are to be our special help in every time of need. Every day we are to come to the Lord with full assurance of faith, and to look to Him for wisdom. . . .

Those who are guided by the Word of the Lord will discern with certainty between falsehood and truth, between sin and righteousness (MS 43, 1907). {7BC 907.1}

It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who will be alive on the earth when past woes and celestial glory will be blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By the means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth. And Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. God's people will not find their safety in working miracles; for Satan would counterfeit any miracle that might be worked. God's tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12-18. They are to take their stand on the living Word—"It is written." This is the only foundation upon which they can stand securely. Those who have broken their covenant with God will in that day be without hope and without God in the world. {TDG 69.3}

The great controversy between good and evil will increase in intensity to the very close of time. In all ages the wrath of Satan has been manifested against the church of Christ; and God has bestowed His grace and Spirit upon His people to strengthen them to stand against the power of the evil one. When the apostles of Christ were to bear His gospel to the world and to record it for all future ages, they were especially endowed with the enlightenment of the Spirit. But as the church approaches her final deliverance, Satan is to work with greater power. He comes down "having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Revelation 12:12. He will work "with all power and signs and lying wonders." 2 Thessalonians 2:9. For six thousand years that mastermind that once was highest among the angels of God has been wholly bent to the work of deception and ruin. And all the depths of satanic skill and subtlety acquired, all the cruelty developed, during these struggles of the ages, will be brought to bear against God's people in the final conflict. And in this time of peril the followers of Christ are to bear to the world the warning of the Lord's second advent; and a people are to be prepared to

stand before Him at His coming, “without spot, and blameless.” 2 Peter 3:14. At this time the special endowment of divine grace and power is not less needful to the church than in apostolic days. {GC ix.4}

There is one safeguard against Satan’s deceptions and snares, that is the truth as it is in Jesus. The truth planted in the heart, nourished by watchfulness and prayer, nourished by the grace of Christ, will give us discernment. The truth must abide in the heart, be felt in its power in spite of all the alluring enchantments of Satan, and your experience and mine must be that the truth can purify, guide, and bless the soul. . . . {TMK 301.4}

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.” The sense of unworthiness will lead the heart to hunger and thirst for righteousness, and this desire will not be disappointed. Those who make room in their hearts for Jesus will realize His love. All who long to bear the likeness of the character of God shall be satisfied. The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.” {DA 302.1}

The effort to grasp the great truths of revelation imparts freshness and vigor to all the faculties. It expands the mind, sharpens the perceptions, and ripens the judgment. The study of the Bible will ennoble every thought, feeling, and aspiration as no other study can. It gives stability of purpose, patience, courage, and fortitude; it refines the character and sanctifies the soul. An earnest, reverent study of the Scriptures, bringing the mind of the student in direct contact with the infinite mind, would give to the world men of stronger and more active intellect, as well as of nobler principle, than has ever resulted from the ablest training that human philosophy affords. “The entrance of Thy words,” says the psalmist, “giveth light; it giveth understanding.” Psalm 119:130. {GC 94.2}

The Lord is constantly at work to open the understanding, to quicken the perceptions, that man may have a right sense of sin and of the far-reaching claims of God’s law. The unconverted man thinks of God as unloving, as severe, and even revengeful; His presence is thought to be a constant restraint, His character an expression of “Thou shalt not.” His service is regarded as full of gloom and hard requirements. But when Jesus is seen upon the cross, as the gift of God because He loved man, the eyes are opened to see things in a new light. God as revealed in Christ is not a severe judge, an avenging tyrant, but a merciful and loving Father. {1SM 183.2}

Men put God out of their knowledge and worshiped the creatures of their own imagination; and as the result, they became more and more debased. The psalmist describes the effect

produced upon the worshiper by the adoration of idols. He says, "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." Psalm 115:8. It is a law of the human mind that by beholding we become changed. Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower. The worshipers of false gods clothed their deities with human attributes and passions, and thus their standard of character was degraded to the likeness of sinful humanity. They were defiled in consequence. {PP 91.2}

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. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward. {GC88 555.2}