

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2020: *Daniel*

Lesson 3 “From Mystery to Revelation”

Read for this week’s study

Daniel 2:1–16; Acts 17:28; Daniel 2:17–49; Psalm 138; John 15:5; Deuteronomy 32:4;
1 Peter 2:4.

Memory Text

“Daniel answered and said: ‘Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might’ ” (Daniel 2:20, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Immanence of God
- III. The Prayer
- IV. The Image, Part One
- V. The Image, Part Two
- VI. The Stone
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Although the rise and fall of nations, ideologies, and political parties seem to happen at the discretion of human whim alone, Daniel 2 shows that it is the God of heaven who actually moves human history to its grand finale.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. “What crisis do the [four] Hebrews [and the astrologers] face because of the dream that the Lord gives to the king?” (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Why is the power of interpretation so seductive in all types of society? Whether it is astrologers, priests, scientists, medical doctors, or stock market interpreters – those who claim to make sense of things wield unusual power over other human beings.
4. Nebuchadnezzar’s insistence that his wise men not only *interpret* the dream but also *retrieve* it (2:9), shows the essence of the epistemological dilemma: certain types of knowledge are in God’s possession only — they require *revealed* knowledge.
5. Though Daniel and his friends’ predicament is life-threatening, they see it as an opportunity (Daniel 2:14 18). Monday’s lesson emphasizes the importance of prayer.

As a result, the message “made known” to Nebuchadnezzar is “made known” to Daniel (2:19).

6. Tuesday & Wednesday deal with the image itself and its significance for our understanding of history. The feet of iron and clay that support the statue reveal that decline and dissolution seem inherent to any human project. The constituent elements are unable to overcome intrinsic incompatibility (2:33, 41-43).
7. Thursday’s lesson is about the stone which was cut out *not by hands* (2:34, 2:45). Most translations say that “a stone was cut out, not by *human* hands.” Yet the “hands” in question are not specified as human or divine (Daniel 2:34, 45). “Hand” is a Semitic metaphor for “power.” If we stress only the contrast between divine and human *agency*, we miss another contrast — and one which is even more important, that focuses on *method*. “A stone was cut out — but not by *power*” (Daniel 2:34, 45). Interestingly, the stone cut from the mountain becomes a mountain itself.
8. With God, *method* and *agency* work together. This is how God’s eternal kingdom will prevail over all human kingdoms. While earthly kingdoms crushed each other by *power*, God will not use *power* to win his case and establish his kingdom.
9. Truth and power may work together temporarily, but sooner or later, they seem to go their separate ways. If power is the goal, eventually truth must be sacrificed. If you want to know the truth, and pursue it honestly, at some point power will have to be sacrificed.
10. If you stay with the truth, you will anger your allies, dishearten your followers, or undermine general social (and ecclesiastical) harmony. We all face the same dilemma: Do we serve power or truth? Is unity (by ensuring everyone believes the same thing) more important than knowing the truth even at the price of disunity? How serious are we in getting to know the truth, even if it undermines our long-cherished interpretations?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

God is a thinking, personal God. And though everything is so complex, who knows how wheels can advance without turning, and so on? It’s far more complex than we can imagine. God is in control. Would that be encouraging to Ezekiel? Isn’t this what they were wondering? Even the heathen were wondering, is the God of Israel in control? And often it might seem as if God is losing a grip on things.

The book of Daniel I understand in the same way. God isn’t even caught by surprise when nations rise and fall. He has even predicted when they will, right down to the end. He has not lost control. How about the book of Revelation at the end? Weren’t the early Christians tempted to think that God had lost a grip on things; things were not working out as the Lord

had apparently predicted? The end had not come within the first generation. And God then gave John this picture. And up in Heaven the angels don't think God has lost control. They're praising him for working things out the way he has. They now understand. These books of Daniel and Revelation and Ezekiel and Isaiah and others that show God's power and his influence and his control, though things are so complex, are very reassuring. And we Adventists have always taken that picture very seriously. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Ezekiel, recorded February, 1982, 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 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/37MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/38MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The same power that upholds nature is working also in man. The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds. Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same—a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place oneself out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin. {MM 10.1}

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. . . . {CC 250.3}

In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but God's can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hidden desires and longings to the Father of infinite pity, and in the hush and silence of the soul that voice which never fails to answer the cry of human need will speak to our hearts. . . . {Pr 182.6}

Those who seek God in secret telling the Lord their needs and pleading for help, will not plead in vain. "Thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly." As we make Christ our daily companion we shall feel that the powers of an unseen world are all around us; and by looking unto Jesus we shall become assimilated to His image. By beholding we become changed. The character is softened, refined, and ennobled for the heavenly kingdom. The sure

result of our intercourse and fellowship with our Lord will be to increase piety, purity, and fervor. There will be a growing intelligence in prayer. We are receiving a divine education, and this is illustrated in a life of diligence and zeal. {Pr 183.2}

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. {Pr 8.4}

When Jesus was upon the earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He directed them to present their daily needs before God, and to cast all their care upon Him. And the assurance He gave them that their petitions should be heard, is assurance also to us.—(*Steps to Christ*, 93.) {Pr 8.5}

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. “The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. {SC 100.1}

Jesus said, “Ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you.” “I have chosen you: . . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you.” John 16:26, 27; 15:16. But to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works. {SC 100.2}

Every earnest petition for grace and strength will be answered. . . . Ask God to do for you those things that you cannot do for yourselves. Tell Jesus everything. Lay open before Him the secrets of your heart; for His eye searches the inmost recesses of the soul, and He reads your thoughts as an open book. When you have asked for the things that are necessary for your soul’s good, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them. Accept His gifts with your whole heart; for Jesus has died that you might have the precious things of heaven as your own, and at last find a home with the heavenly angels in the kingdom of God. {ML 16.4}

At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. {DA 669.4}

The way to the throne of God is always open. You cannot always be on your knees in prayer, but your silent petitions may constantly ascend to God for strength and guidance. When tempted, as you will be, you may flee to the secret place of the Most High. His everlasting arms will be underneath you.—(*Counsels on Health*, 362.) {Pr 179.4}

Communion with God encourages good thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, and lofty purposes of action. Those who thus connect themselves with God are acknowledged by Him as His sons and daughters. They are constantly reaching higher and still higher, obtaining clearer views of God and of eternity, until the Lord makes them channels of light and wisdom to the world. {MYP 247.1}

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

There is a mighty power in prayer. Our great adversary is constantly seeking to keep the troubled soul away from God. An appeal to Heaven by the humblest saint is more to be dreaded by Satan than the decrees of cabinets or the mandates of kings. {HP 82.5}

It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask. {ML 15.5}

It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. Thus faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a watered garden. His health shall spring forth speedily; his light shall rise in obscurity, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him. Let us then remember the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the multitude of His tender mercies. {DA 348.2}

God will not vindicate any device whereby man shall in the slightest degree rule or oppress his fellowman. As soon as a man begins to make an iron rule for other men, he dishonors God and imperils his own soul and the souls of his brethren.—7T 181 (1902). {1MCP 53.3}

As the wheel-like complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of this earth. {PK 536.1}

While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God. {DA 173.1}

It is impossible for finite minds to comprehend the work of redemption. Its mystery exceeds human knowledge; yet he who passes from death to life realizes that it is a divine reality. The beginning of redemption we may know here through a personal experience. Its results reach through the eternal ages. {DA 173.2}

In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace—in “the beauty of the Lord our God.” Psalm 90:17. Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man’s true ideal, He awakened, for its attainment, both desire and faith. In His presence souls despised and fallen realized that they still were men, and they longed to prove themselves worthy of His regard. In many a heart that seemed dead to all things holy, were awakened new impulses. To many a despairing one there opened the possibility of a new life. {Ed 80.1}

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple courts, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan’s influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. {PK 369.3}

If in our ignorance we make missteps, the Saviour does not forsake us. We need never feel that we are alone. Angels are our companions. The Comforter that Christ promised to send in His name abides with us. In the way that leads to the City of God there are no difficulties which those who trust in Him may not overcome. There are no dangers which they may not escape.

There is not a sorrow, not a grievance, not a human weakness, for which He has not provided a remedy. {MH 249.1}

When temptations assail you, when care, perplexity, and darkness seem to surround your soul, look to the place where you last saw the light. Rest in Christ's love and under His protecting care. When sin struggles for the mastery in the heart, when guilt oppresses the soul and burdens the conscience, when unbelief clouds the mind, remember that Christ's grace is sufficient to subdue sin and banish the darkness. Entering into communion with the Saviour, we enter the region of peace. {MH 250.1}

The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves—it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. With it come serenity and composure. It implants in the soul, joy that nothing earthly can destroy,—joy in the Holy Spirit,—health-giving, life-giving joy. {MH 115.3}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour. {COL 419.6}

When temptations assail you, when care and perplexity surround you, when, depressed and discouraged, you are ready to yield to despair, look to Jesus, and the darkness that encompasses you will be dispelled by the bright shining of His presence. When sin struggles for the mastery in your soul, and burdens the conscience, look to the Saviour. His grace is sufficient to subdue sin. Let your grateful heart, trembling with uncertainty, turn to Him. Lay hold on the hope set before you. Christ waits to adopt you into His family. His strength will help your weakness; He will lead you step by step. Place your hand in His, and let Him guide you. {MH 85.1}

Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. Seek Him as One who desires to be found of you. He desires you not only to touch His garments, but to walk with Him in constant communion. {MH 85.2}

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government is bound up the well-

being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty.

{PP 42.4}

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. {MH 36.2}