

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2020: *How to Interpret Scripture*

Lesson 8 “Creation: Genesis as Foundation, Part 1”

Read for this week’s study

John 1:1–3; Genesis 1:3–5; Exodus 20:8–11; Revelation 14:7; Matthew 19:3–6; Romans 5:12.

Memory Text

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:1–4, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. In the Beginning
- III. The Days of Creation
- IV. The Sabbath and Creation
- V. Creation and Marriage
- VI. Creation, the Fall, and the Cross
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The first chapters of Genesis are foundational for the rest of Scripture. The major teachings or doctrines of the Bible have their source in these first chapters [...] which will be our study this week and next.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Why are the first chapters of Genesis foundational and crucial for our interpretation of Scripture? What is the role of doctrine in Christian life and practice? How can we achieve balance between orthodoxy and orthopraxy?
3. What is significant about the fact that God is the Creator of everything, all that is seen and unseen? (Sunday’s lesson)
4. What are the implications of how we interpret the days of creation? If God will transform mortality into immortality instantly “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet” (1 Corinthians 15:52, NKJV), why would He use six days (or billions of years) for the first creation? (Monday’s lesson)

5. What is the significance of Sabbath in the Creation story? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. How does the Creation story in Genesis 1:26-28 & Genesis 2:18, 21-24 highlight the significance of marriage? (Wednesday's lesson) What are the implications of this for contemporary societal struggles relating to the institution of marriage? How can we be inclusive of those who, for whatever reasons, do not live in marriage, have a childless marriage, or find themselves trapped in a relationship which falls short of God's ideal? Does the community of Jesus offer hope for them?
7. What is the connection between Creation, the Fall and Redemption? How does Romans 6:23 & 5:12 help us see the connection between them? Which models of interpretation have been most helpful to you?
8. Both Genesis and geology agree (though using different models) that the creation of life was not instantaneous but progressive. The first angel's message (Revelation 14:5-6) encourages worship not of "WHEN" or "HOW" God made heaven and earth, but worship Him WHO made heaven and earth.
9. We are all wired differently, and what satisfies one can be disappointing to another. Is it possible to find a way to stop stumbling over the when and how of creation, and move the focus back to our heaven-given mission of promoting worship of the Who of creation? What would that God have to be like to win your admiration and worship?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now when we read that first angel's message to worship the Creator of the heaven and earth, the Creator of the sea and springs, perhaps we are reminded that the first mention of the Sabbath comes in the Bible at the end of creation week. I wonder if tonight we could think back in imagination to the very dramatic events of that first week of this earth's history. The war had begun already up in Heaven. Satan had already leveled his charges and his accusations. One-third of the angels had already agreed with him that God is not worthy of our love and our trust.

Right in the middle of that devastating crisis, God invites his family to watch him as he creates yet another world, this time ours. How easily he could have created our world with a snap of his fingers, in just an instant of time. But in the dramatic and significant setting of the Great Controversy, he chose, this time, to do it in six twenty-four hour days. On the first day, all he said was, "Let there be light." That's all. And then day two, three, four, and five, as God in unhurried majesty and drama unfolded his plans for our earth. By the sixth day, what a beautiful place this was. Where now were Satan's charges that God was selfish?

I mean, look at the freedom. He created us in his own image with power to think and to do. And we know from human history that he created us free to either love and trust him or hate him

and spit in his face, because it has been done. He created us able to do it. God even allowed Satan to approach our first parents at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And he didn't hide that tree in some dark corner of the garden; he put it right in the middle near the Tree of Life, so that Adam and Even would see it every time they came to that other tree. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10, "The Reminder of the Evidence" recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. Such a course would have been contrary to God's plan in dealing with the inhabitants of other worlds. It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. {PP 49.1}

The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. They were full of the vigor imparted by the tree of life, and their intellectual power was but little less than that of the angels. The mysteries of the visible universe—"the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)—afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life. With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that playeth among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balancings of the clouds," the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night—all were open to the study of our first parents. On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God's name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power. They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude. {PP 50.3}

In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation. It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. “His strength setteth fast the mountains.” “The sea is His, and He made it.” Psalm 65:6; 95:5. It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song. And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father’s love. {DA 20.1}

Jesus was the light of His people—the Light of the world—before He came to earth in the form of humanity. The first gleam of light that pierced the gloom in which sin had wrapped the world, came from Christ. And from Him has come every ray of heaven’s brightness that has fallen upon the inhabitants of the earth. In the plan of redemption Christ is the Alpha and the Omega—the First and the Last. {PP 367.3}

The demands upon God are even greater upon the Sabbath than upon other days. His people then leave their usual employment, and spend the time in meditation and worship. They ask more favors of Him on the Sabbath than upon other days. They demand His special attention. They crave His choicest blessings. God does not wait for the Sabbath to pass before He grants these requests. Heaven’s work never ceases, and men should never rest from doing good. The Sabbath is not intended to be a period of useless inactivity. {DA 207.2}

To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ’s creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28. {DA 289.1}

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment was instituted in Eden. After God had made the world and created man upon the earth, He made the Sabbath for man. After Adam’s sin and fall nothing was taken from the law of God. The principles of the Ten Commandments existed before the fall and were of a character suited to the condition of a holy order of beings. After the fall the principles of those precepts were not changed, but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state. {SR 145.2}

The Sabbath is a pledge given by God to man—a sign of the relation existing between the Creator and His created beings. {3SM 256.1}

To give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own, and thus make Him known. And in whatever way we make known the Father or the Son, we glorify God (MS 16, 1890). {7BC 979.4}

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

there will appear new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects of study to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul. {ML 358.5}

To the weary and heavy laden, to those who have fought the good fight of faith, it will be a glorious rest; for the youth and vigor of immortality will be theirs, and against sin and Satan they will no longer have to contend. {ML 358.7}

Adam was crowned king in Eden. To him was given dominion over every living thing that God had created. The Lord blessed Adam and Eve with intelligence such as He had not given to any other creature. He made Adam the rightful sovereign over all the works of His hands. {AG 40.2}

Man was not made to dwell in solitude; he was to be a social being. Without companionship, the beautiful scenes and delightful employments of Eden would have failed to yield perfect happiness. Even communion with angels could not have satisfied his desire for sympathy and companionship. There was none of the same nature to love, and to be loved. {FLB 251.2}

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided “an help meet for him”—a helper corresponding to him—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it.” Ephesians 5:29. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one.” {PP 46.2}

The knowledge which God did not want our first parents to have was a knowledge of guilt. And when they accepted the assertions of Satan, which were false, disobedience and transgression were introduced into our world. This disobedience to God’s express command, this belief of Satan’s lie, opened the floodgates of woe upon the world.—RH, Apr 5, 1898. {2MCP 562.1}

Angels of God visited Adam and Eve, and told them of the fall of Satan, and warned them to be on their guard. They cautioned them not to separate from each other in their employment, for they might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. If one of them were alone, they would be in greater danger than if both were together. The angels enjoined upon them to closely follow the instructions God had given them, for in perfect obedience they were safe, and this fallen foe could then have no power to deceive them. God would not permit Satan to follow the holy pair with continual temptations. He could have access to them only at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. {3SG 39.1}

It was not the will of God that this sinless pair should have any knowledge of evil. He had freely given them the good but withheld the evil. Eve thought the words of the serpent wise, and she

received the broad assertion, “Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” — making God a liar. Satan boldly insinuated that God had deceived them to keep them from being exalted in knowledge equal with Himself. God said: If ye eat ye shall surely die. The serpent said, If ye eat, “ye shall not surely die.” {SR 34.1}

Our first parents chose to believe the words, as they thought, of a serpent; yet he had given them no tokens of his love. He had done nothing for their happiness and benefit, while God had given them everything that was good for food and pleasant to the sight. Everywhere the eye might rest was abundance and beauty; yet Eve was deceived by the serpent, to think that there was something withheld which would make them wise, even as God. Instead of believing and confiding in God, she basely distrusted His goodness and cherished the words of Satan. {SR 37.2}

Satan was not to follow them with continual temptations; he could have access to them only at the forbidden tree. Should they attempt to investigate its nature, they would be exposed to his wiles. They were admonished to give careful heed to the warning which God had sent them and to be content with the instruction which He had seen fit to impart. {PP 53.3}

The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the word of God: “Affliction shall not rise up the second time.” Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom. {GC 504.1}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. . . . {GC 541.3}

But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. {GC 36.1}

God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. {COL 84.4}

No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. "Man turns from God, not God from him." Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests with the sinner. By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power. Thus he passes on from one stage of resistance to another, until at last the light will fail to impress, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. {MB 93.1}

We want all to understand how the soul is destroyed. It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. {5T 120.2}

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not desire to be set free, if we will not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. {SC 34.2}

But if the erring one persistently refuses to heed the voice that calls him with pitying, tender love, he will at last be left in darkness. The heart that has long slighted God's mercy, becomes hardened in sin, and is no longer susceptible to the influence of the grace of God. Fearful will be the doom of that soul of whom the pleading Saviour shall finally declare, he "is joined to idols: let him alone." Hosea 4:17. {PP 165.2}

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. {DA 764.1}

Recommended Reading:

The Story of Redemption Chapter 2 – "The Creation" <https://egwwritings.org>