

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**Second Quarter 2020: *How to Interpret Scripture***  
**Lesson 10 “The Bible as History”**

**Read for this week’s study**

1 Samuel 17; Isaiah 36:1–3; Isaiah 37:14–38; Daniel 1, 5; Matthew 26:57–67; Hebrews 11:1–40.

**Memory Text**

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 20:2 [also Deuteronomy 5:6], NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. David, Solomon, and the Monarchy
- III. Isaiah, Hezekiah, and Sennacherib
- IV. Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, and Babylon
- V. The Historical Jesus
- VI. Faith and History
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Facilitator: Daniel Duda**

1. “This week, we’ll look at some of the key issues in history as portrayed in the Bible and also at some of the archeological evidence that helps substantiate history as expressed in the Bible.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What is the significance of the fact that we have archeological proof that David, Solomon (Sunday’s lesson), Isaiah, Hezekiah and Sennacherib (Monday’s lesson), Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar (Tuesday’s lesson) were historical persons who existed in ancient Israel?
3. Which facts of Jesus’ life can be corroborated by history? (Wednesday’s lesson)
4. “Though it’s nice to have archaeological evidence that supports our faith, why must we learn not to make our faith depend upon these things, as helpful as they might at times be?” (Wednesday’s lesson) “What happens when archeological evidence is found that is interpreted in ways that contradict the biblical story? What should this tell us about the fact that we must depend on the Word of God as the Word of God

and trust it as such, regardless of the claims of archeology or any other human science?” (Friday’s lesson)

5. How can we have “justified beliefs”? Are our beliefs falsifiable? What happens if they are not? Where does a reasonable faith end and a blind sectarianism begin? What is the difference between “truth seeking” and “position defense”? Why is it so important to distinguish between them? What happens when the Bible is used merely to defend historical/traditional positions?
6. What lessons can we learn from the lives of the ancient heroes mentioned in Hebrews 11:1-40? (Thursday’s lesson)
7. What is the purpose of the historic writings in the Bible? How do we “read” them? How does the descriptive material become prescriptive—God’s word for us in a different time and culture?
8. What is God’s “modus operandi” in the historical books of the Bible? How is that different from the Wisdom literature, Prophets or Gospels? What are the implications of this for our personal lives?
9. What are the differences between how history was perceived (and written) in ancient times and how historical science is conducted today?
10. Contemporary historians claim that through most of the past, history functioned as a form of propaganda. All nations were active in the creation and promotion of their “national story” by way of managing their historical records using heroic figures, important national events (mixed with some class considerations and gender) to create nationalism. Is the Bible trying to create a “national story” of the Jewish nation, or is it different from ancient histories?
11. Postmodernism claims that all meta-narratives are oppressive. Does that apply to the Great Controversy model as well? Why or why not? How can we read the Bible in such a way that it is inspiring and not a “national story” propaganda? Empowering rather than oppressive?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

God has revealed the truth about himself in history. These are real events, real questions in the minds of real people, and God has answered these by involving himself in the affairs of his family. That’s why the Bible is a story; it’s a history. And we need to be reminded of the answers God has given by demonstration all through the centuries. This is how the evidence accumulates. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Leviticus, 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/5MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/6MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Now even for God, the only way to meet the accusation that he cannot be trusted, is to demonstrate that he can be trusted. Some might say, since he's infinitely powerful, why couldn't he just with great authority and show of power *claim* to be trustworthy? Because anybody could claim to be trustworthy. Claims prove nothing. And this is why the Bible is made up not of claims, but of a long, very costly history of God's revelation and demonstration of his trustworthiness. And those who read the Bible this way don't leave anything out. For everything from Genesis 1 to Revelations 22 is part of the record of the demonstration of God's infinite trustworthiness under a great variety of usually difficult circumstances. Then you don't want to leave anything out.

Now those who think God could settle it with just claims, just need a text here or there that says, well you don't need to look up anything else, it says he's love. The devil could say, "I'm love." The devil has to resort to claims because the truth is not with him. And I hope we're wise enough not to believe mere claims. And yet, hasn't religion used this all through the centuries? Isn't much preaching authoritarian statement without evidence? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 3, recorded October, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/5MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/6MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

What is it today that we Christians are trying to say about our God? Is it the truth? Is it really good news? Are we using the best ways of saying it? In spite of our best efforts, what are people actually hearing? Are there perhaps better ways to say it?

I believe that these are the most important questions facing us Christians today—for our own salvation and in order to fulfill our mission to the world. History warns that there is no justification for an easy confidence. There is a certain elusiveness about the Good News. It is not something that can be summarily stated and hammered home.

It was difficult even for God to explain the subtle though vital differences between the truth and Satan's charges. Even for him it was more effective to demonstrate the Good News than to explain it! This is why the Bible is so largely a history of God's handling of rebellion and his firm but gracious treatment of those who have been caught up in its destructive consequences. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 33. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002} <http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-04>

So claims are not evidence—anybody can make claims. And God has not made that mistake. You remember when John the Baptist who formerly had stated so confidently this is the one, is now languishing in prison and he heard Jesus say that saints ought to visit the afflicted in prison, but Jesus never came to see him. And perhaps he began to wonder if this really was the

promised one. And he sent two emissaries to ask Jesus, "Are you the one or not?" Now what answer did Jesus give? Did he say, "Yes I am and I expect John to exercise faith"? Why, it could have been Satan saying, "Yes I'm the Christ." He's going to do this in the near future. Instead, Jesus invited them to spend the day with him. And they listened to his gracious words fully in harmony with the Old Testament. They watched how he treated the people. They noticed the look on his countenance. They heard the sound of his voice. They were greatly impressed and they went home that night with their report. And John said, "Well is he the one or not?" And they replied, "Well he didn't say."

"Then why didn't you come right home?"

"Well he invited us to spend the day with him."

"Tell me what you heard and saw." And they began to describe and before long John said, "He is indeed the one." For that whole description coincided perfectly with all that he knew to be true from the Old Testament. It was the way the evidence all fit together that provided him with a basis for his continuing faith and confidence. And I think that explains why the Bible is written the way it is. It's not just a list of claims. It's a record of God's revelation of himself in many different ways all down through the centuries of history. And God invites us to watch him.

And most of the Bible consists of the details that describe the setting within which God spoke and acted. And without those details, those descriptions of those settings, we would not be in a position to understand why God so spoke and so acted in such a variety of ways, under varying circumstances, still perfectly consistent at all times. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, PUC Teacher's Conference, #1 "The Purpose of Teaching Bible", recorded 1974, Angwin, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/1MMPUCTEACH>

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

The more the mind dwells upon these themes, the more it will be seen that the same principles run through natural and spiritual things. There is harmony between nature and Christianity; for both have the same Author. The book of nature and the book of revelation indicate the working of the same divine mind. There are lessons to be learned in nature; and there are lessons, deep, earnest, and all-important lessons, to be learned from the book of God. {FE 85.3}

In the annals of human history the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as 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, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human

interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. {Ed 173.2}

Men whom God favored, and to whom He entrusted great responsibilities, were sometimes overcome by temptation and committed sin, even as we at the present day strive, waver, and frequently fall into error. Their lives, with all their faults and follies, are open before us, both for our encouragement and warning. If they had been represented as without fault, we, with our sinful nature, might despair at our own mistakes and failures. But seeing where others struggled through discouragements like our own, where they fell under temptations as we have done, and yet took heart again and conquered through the grace of God, we are encouraged in our striving after righteousness. As they, though sometimes beaten back, recovered their ground, and were blessed of God, so we too may be overcomers in the strength of Jesus. {PP 238.2}

A guardian angel is appointed to every follower of Christ. These heavenly watchers shield the righteous from the power of the wicked one. This Satan himself recognized when he said: "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" Job 1:9, 10. The agency by which God protects His people is presented in the words of the psalmist: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Psalm 34:7. Said the Saviour, speaking of those that believe in Him: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father." Matthew 18:10. The angels appointed to minister to the children of God have at all times access to His presence. {GC 512.2}

Thus God's people, exposed to the deceptive power and unsleeping malice of the prince of darkness, and in conflict with all the forces of evil, are assured of the unceasing guardianship of heavenly angels. {GC 513.1}

All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. {6T 63.3}

The angels of heaven are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. We know not now who they are; it is not yet made manifest who shall overcome, and share the inheritance of the saints in light; but angels of heaven are passing throughout the length and breadth of the earth, seeking to comfort the sorrowing, to protect the imperiled, to win the hearts of men to Christ. Not one is neglected or passed by. God is no respecter of persons, and He has an equal care for all the souls He has created. {DA 639.1}

But in the midst of the time of trouble that is coming,—a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation,—God’s chosen people will stand unmoved. Satan and his host cannot destroy them, for angels that excel in strength will protect them. {9T 17.1}

Every weak, doubting, struggling soul who yields fully to the Lord is placed in direct touch with agencies that enable him to overcome. Heaven is near to him, and he has the support and help of angels of mercy in every time of trial and need. {AA 299.1}

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. Not one that in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy’s power. The Saviour is by the side of His tempted and tried ones. With Him there can be no such thing as failure, loss, impossibility, or defeat; we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. When temptations and trials come, do not wait to adjust all the difficulties, but look to Jesus, your helper. {DA 490.5}

But though the conflict is a ceaseless one, none are left to struggle alone. Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him. As His children draw near to Him for protection from evil, in pity and love He lifts up for them a standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands. {PK 570.4}

In the future life we shall understand things that here greatly perplex us. We shall realize how strong a helper we had and how angels of God were commissioned to guard us as we followed the counsel of the Word of God. {HP 257.3}

The heavenly intelligences, angels that excel in strength, are waiting, obedient to His command, to unite with human agencies; and the Lord will interpose when matters have come to such a pass that none but a divine power can counteract the satanic agencies at work. When His people shall be in the greatest danger, seemingly unable to stand against the power of Satan, God will work in their behalf. Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity. {2SM 373.1}

The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man’s sanctification, and man is to co-operate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them. {AA 532.2}

Faith . . . reaches out to grasp the hand of Christ, knowing that He will hold more firmly than it is possible for the human hand to hold, and that He will never let go. While the human agent is willing to be led, Christ will lead him. . . . {UL 72.2}

He who constantly depends upon God through simple trust and prayerful confidence, will be surrounded by the angels of heaven. He who lives by faith in Christ, will be strengthened and upheld, able to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon eternal life. {HP 16.7}

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}

Jesus does not call on us to follow Him, and then forsake us. If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. If in our ignorance we make missteps, Christ does not leave us. His voice, clear and distinct, is heard, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." [John 14:6.] "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper." [Psalm 72:12.] {GW 263.1}