

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2020: *Education*

Lesson 3 “The Law as Teacher”

Read for this week’s study

Deuteronomy 6:5; Deuteronomy 31:9–27; Romans 3:19–23; Revelation 12:17; 14:12;
Mark 6:25–27; Hebrews 5:8.

Memory Text

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. To Love and to Fear God
- III. A Witness Against You
- IV. That You May Prosper
- V. The Toils and Struggles of Law Keepers
- VI. Jesus, Our Example
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. If Jesus Christ is the greatest revelation of God and the pinnacle of human understanding of ultimate reality, why the Old Testament? What was its purpose and what is its continuing purpose? What does Galatians 3:19-25 imply about that purpose? (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. Read Deuteronomy 31:9-13. What does it mean to “fear the Lord”? What is the role of “fearing God” in child-raising? How do you love and fear God at the same time? Deuteronomy was the constitution for the ancient state of Israel, so it makes sense that it should be regularly read and studied. What is the Christian equivalent of Deuteronomy? What is the Adventist equivalent? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Deuteronomy 31:14-27. As Moses’ death was approaching, what were his chief concerns for Israel and how did he address those concerns? In speaking of the Law as a “witness against them,” what did Moses mean and what is a New Testament equivalent of that concept (Romans 3:19-23)? (Monday’s Lesson)

4. Read Joshua 1:7-8. What was the Lord saying to Joshua, and how do the principles found there apply to us today? What is the New Testament's understanding of law and obedience (Revelation 12:17; 14:12; Romans 1:5; 16:26; Ephesians 2:8; James 2:10-12, 17)? If we are not saved by obeying God's law, why is it so important to keep it? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read 2 Chronicles 31:20-21. What were the key reasons that Hezekiah the king prospered? How do you square this with the fact that God's faithful children suffer from loss, poverty and disaster (see Job 1 and 2; 2 Corinthians 11:23-29; Hebrews 11:13-16)? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Psalm 40:8; Luke 2:51-52; Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 5:8 and John 8:28-29. What do these passages tell about Jesus' obedience throughout His life? How should we relate to His behavior (1 John 2:6)? Do you think it is true that "actions speak louder than words"? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. Like Israel of old, we are invited to love God and to fear God at the same time (Matthew 22:37; Revelation 14:7). Why would you say that these two commandments are not in conflict with each other? (Friday's Lesson)
8. Is there a difference between setting a standard and making a rule? Which of the two is more common in the Adventist tradition? (Friday's Lesson)
9. Read Psalm 119 and note how many times notions of obedience, freedom, laws, rules and commands are stated. What does the author of Psalm 119 want to convey about these themes? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Had he left Lucifer to die, the universe would have misunderstood and assumed God had put him to death. So only by God coming; he said, "No one takes my life from me. Nobody can kill me. I'm going through this myself. I have arranged this with my Father." And the universe looking on said, "The Father isn't killing the Son; God isn't killing God." And it was clear enough to them that they could say, "Our questions are answered. One: sin does result in death. Two: but it is not torture and execution at the hands of our gracious God. Only one thing left. God, why were you so concerned that we understand this?" God says, "Because if you serve me from fear, it will turn you into rebels; holy rebels."

He says, "Come to Calvary. Maybe you slept through Gethsemane, Peter and James. Then please come to Calvary and watch." Peter and James had fled. John came, fortunately, and has the most to say about it. On Calvary, Jesus was tortured to death. By whom? The most devout group of blueprinting Adventists the world has ever known. Absolutely dedicated to God, the scriptures, creation, the Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, you name it. Jesus said you even strain gnats out of your goat's milk, and the rest of it. Real health reformers. You couldn't fault

them for a thing. You couldn't have disfellowshipped one of the people who crucified Christ. Their lives were apparently without blemish.

But they hated him; they hated his picture of God. They said he had a devil to be describing God the way he was. They killed him to silence his unbiblical heresy. And the angels looking on said, "We thought, by sending your Son to Palestine, you did that to get a good running start with people who already agreed with you. We didn't realize you sent him there to prove this costly point, that if we obey you for the wrong reason, because we don't really know you, we could turn into your worst enemies in the middle of our Sabbath-keeping and our tithe-paying and our health-reforming." And that's why I believe the biggest mistake the Adventist church could make in these last days is to have one tremendous revival in reformation, get out the blueprint, straighten out our lives, without spending much more time on the picture of God. Because if we do the right things for the wrong reason, we'll do what the Jews did, and become his enemies. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Questions People Are Asking About the Plan of Salvation, recorded April 1983, Redlands, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

[http://pkp.cc/1MMQUESTP \(Part 1\)](http://pkp.cc/1MMQUESTP) [http://pkp.cc/2MMQUESTP \(Part 2\)](http://pkp.cc/2MMQUESTP)

I believe that to be afraid of God is to misunderstand, even to deny, what he paid such a price to reveal. Though God is infinite in majesty and power, he values nothing higher than the freedom of his intelligent creatures; that their love, their worship, their trust, their willingness to listen may be freely given. I understand that God desires our trust to be freely given, not because he simply prefers it that way, as any parent would, but he knows that if our love and trust are not freely given, then there really is no freedom in his family. And God would rather die than preside over a universe that is not free.

Besides, he also knows, as he sought to explain to us at such cost, that the obedience that springs from fear will actually turn his children into rebels. Rebelliousness is the very essence of sin. God sent his Son to deal with sin. He sent his Son to do away with sin, you recall, in Romans 8. But in order to do away with rebelliousness and distrust, first he must do away with fear, because it is fear that has turned so many away from God. It is fear that has inspired rebelliousness even in the hearts of those who seek to obey him, but do not know him well. As I understand it from our discussion last time, God gave his life to make it eternally clear that there is no need for his children to be afraid of him. Surely a God who would go to such lengths to indicate that though he is infinite in power there is no need for us to be afraid, surely that God is worthy of our love, our reverence, our worship, and our willingness to listen and obey. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #9, "There Is No

Need to Be Afraid of God” 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/9MMCAG>

We usually use 1 John 3:4, and we usually translate that, “Sin is the transgression of the law.” But that’s a rather expansive translation of one word. And it tempts one to put the Ten Commandments up on the wall and say, “Well, I haven’t broken that one, and that one, and that one, and that one, so this has been a rather good day.” Paul used to look down the Ten, and on a Tuesday night when he knelt to pray, he could say, “This has been a good day. I haven’t murdered anybody. I haven’t committed adultery today. I haven’t stolen today. I haven’t broken the Sabbath, because it was Tuesday anyway. I thank Thee, Lord, I am not like this publican over here.”

And then he looked at the tenth, and he realized he had been breaking them. Because sin in 1 John 3:4, is not “the transgression of the law.” The Greek says “sin is lawlessness.” Sin is a state of mind. It’s an attitude. And that’s what is here. “Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, to him it is rebelliousness.” “*Lawlessness*” is the literal Greek word in 1 John 3:4. Moreover, when you think of the fact that it’s God who has told us what to do, and everything he has asked us to do is for our best good, and if we do not do it, that suggests distrust. And you remember in Romans 14, the last verse: “Whatever is not of faith and trust is sin.”

Sin is a breach of trust. And I think we would protect ourselves from a rather mechanical understanding—or *misunderstanding* of sin, if we put these three verses together instead of one. Romans 14, James 4 and 1 John 3. “Sin is lawlessness.” “Sin is knowing what you ought to do but not doing it.” “Sin is a breach of trust.” And I think they’re all in harmony there, aren’t they? You could even put Malachi with it: “Cursed be the cheat.” Not that God hates cheats. He just can’t help cheats. He can’t save and heal cheats. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 –1 and 2 Peter and James*, recorded July 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:* <http://pkp.cc/75MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/76MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Now there had been a day when Paul himself was satisfied with the obedience that resulted from law and fear. He thought it was the right thing to do. That was what the sovereign God preferred. But now Paul knows the good news. He knows the truth, and he realizes that God does not want the obedience that springs from law and fear. He wants the obedience of faith; the obedience that comes from free people who agree with God that this is the right thing to do. They agree so fully, they don’t even need to be told to do so. They do what is right because they agree it is right.

Now look again at Paul's understanding of his commission in Romans 1, and it's the theme that runs through the whole book, Romans 1:4, 5. Had there been more room, I would have liked to have started earlier, for at the beginning of this paragraph, Paul says, "I have been called to make known God's good news about him and about his Son." Then he goes on with the words on the sheet: "His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom I have received grace and a commission for his name's sake to win men to the obedience that springs from faith" (*Weymouth*).

Not the obedience that springs from law, but the obedience that springs from faith. Now, what produces this obedience that springs from faith? Is it not the good news about our God, the kind of person he is, what he wants of us, and how infinitely worthy he is of our love and trust? And how highly he values our freedom, that leads us to a willingness to listen, the meaning of obedience. It leads to loyalty. It leads to Revelation 14:12: "Here are they who keep God's commandments and maintain their loyalty to him and to his Son."

So the first angel comes with the everlasting gospel, the everlasting good news. What is it? Well, everyone ought, perhaps, to state his own version. I had the privilege of putting it on the back of the invitation to these conversations about God. Right on the back, I wrote:

The Good News is God is not the kind of person his enemies have made him out to be; arbitrary, unforgiving, and severe. Jesus said, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." God is just as loving and trustworthy as his Son; just as willing to forgive and heal. Though infinite in majesty and power, our Creator is an equally gracious person who values nothing higher than the freedom, the dignity, and the individuality of his intelligent creatures, that their love, their faith, their willingness to listen and obey may be freely given.

This is the truth revealed through all the books of scripture. This is the everlasting good news that wins the trust and admiration of God's loyal children throughout the universe.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #16, "God's Last Pleading with His Children" 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/16MMCAG>

And then, one thing that occupies so much space in Deuteronomy, the blessings and the cursings. We will have occasion to discuss these again. Are there not chapters that say if you're good you'll be blessed, if you're bad, you'll be punished? If you're good, you'll be prospered, if you're bad, you'll be poor.

And this was the theology of the three friends who came to Job, for Job was known as the most prosperous man in the area. If you are prosperous it's because you are blessed. If you are blessed, it's because you're good. So, obviously Job had been a very good man. But when he lost his family and his belongings and his health, he obviously had been very bad, because when you are bad you are not blessed, and when you are not blessed you lose your prosperity. So they had it all worked out very simply. They came to Job and said, "We don't know what you've done, but we've never seen so wealthy a man now so poor, and you've even lost your health. You've lost everything. You must have done something very, very wicked. Confess it. It says in Deuteronomy if you will confess and come back God will bless you again and you will regain your prosperity." And Job said, "I think you've misunderstood it all. I don't know why this has happened, but you are wrong." "Why," they said, "we've got all the texts in Deuteronomy to prove it!" Of course, Deuteronomy hadn't been written yet. But this was the idea they had, you see, and the whole book of Job discusses this.

Well, doesn't that influence us to this present time? How about in the days of Christ? Jesus said it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to be saved. His own disciples said, "Well, if a rich man cannot be saved, who can?" Because you see, if you're rich, you're blessed. You're blessed because you're good. So if you're rich, you're good. Then if a rich man cannot be saved, that means if a good man cannot be saved; how can a poor man be saved? Because if you're poor, it's because you're not blessed, and you're not blessed because you're bad.

See, they had it all neatly worked out beautifully, just as we sometimes work it out. You see, when the locusts go through the neighbor's field, you know he hasn't paid his tithe or something like that. Or if a family has an accident, you know there's an Achan in the camp. We're so quick to figure it out. What are we to understand from this? The blessings and the cursings, God is talking to his children there. "Be good and I will reward you. Be bad and I'll have to spank you." Haven't you done that to your children?

But there comes a time when we have to grow up. The book of Job is not a bedtime story, and I have great confidence in bedtime stories. Bedtime stories are for children. In the bedtime story, when a family runs out of food and they pray, they've hardly said "Amen," when someone is knocking on the door with a food basket. That's happened over and over in wonderful ways, as you know. When a family runs out of food and they pray, and they say "Amen", and nobody knocks on the door, but they still trust God, that's for grownups. And that's the book of Job.

God is looking for grownups in these last days. For is it not possible that during the time of trouble we will lose many things as Job did? We may even lose our health. And yet, covered with boils, with no evidence whatever, according to the theology of the day that God approved him, Job remained God's friend. God could hardly wait at the end to interrupt and say, "Job, you've done magnificently; you've said of me what is right." And in these last days, very difficult

ones, not a time for children but for grownups like Job, we must come to the place where we don't look for these reassurances that a child has to have all the time. No wet fleeces and dry ones. Maybe apparently deserted like Job, and yet remain loyal to the very end. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Deuteronomy, recorded November 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/9MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/10MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Recommended Listening:

Conversations About God #9 “There is No Need to Be Afraid of God” is available at:

<http://pkp.cc/9MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

God's work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power, to meet the wants of men in the different ages. Beginning with the first gospel promise, and coming down through the patriarchal and Jewish ages, and even to the present time, there has been a gradual unfolding of the purposes of God in the plan of redemption. {PP 373.2}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

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}

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejectors 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}

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}

God's dealings with rebellion will result in fully unmasking the work that has so long been carried on under cover. The results of Satan's rule, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, will be laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The law of God will stand fully vindicated. It will be seen that all the dealings of God have been conducted with reference to the eternal good of His people, and the good of all the worlds that He has created. Satan himself, in the presence of the witnessing universe, will confess the justice of God's government and the righteousness of His law. {PP 338.4}

The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression. {6BC 1110.4}

In love He [Jesus] comes to reveal the Father, to reconcile man to God, to make him a new creature renewed after the image of Him who created him. {1SM 321.3}

In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. {GC 465.1}

The gifts of Jesus are ever fresh and new. . . . Each new gift increases the capacity of the receiver to appreciate and enjoy the blessings of the Lord. He gives grace for grace. There can be no failure of supply. If you abide in Him, the fact that you receive a rich gift today insures the reception of a richer gift tomorrow. . . . {AG 104.2}

Every human being is the object of loving interest to Him who gave His life that He might bring men back to God. Souls guilty and helpless, liable to be destroyed by the arts and snares of Satan, are cared for as a shepherd cares for the sheep of his flock. {MH 162.1}

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}

Christ bound them to His heart by the ties of love and devotion; and by the same ties He bound them to their fellow men. With Him love was life, and life was service. “Freely ye have received,” He said, “freely give.” Matthew 10:8. {Ed 80.2}

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. {FE 179.3}

It is through the mighty agency of the Holy Spirit that the government of Satan is to be subdued and subjected. It is the Holy Spirit that convinces of sin, and expels it from the soul by the consent of the human agent. The mind is then brought under a new law, and that law is the royal law of liberty. Jesus came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul; for sin can triumph only when the liberty of the soul is extinguished. Jesus reached to the very depth of human woe and misery, and His love attracts man to Himself. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, He lifts the mind up from its degradation, and fastens it upon the eternal reality. Through the merits of Christ man may be able to exercise the noblest powers of his being, and expel sin from his soul. . . . {TDG 124.2}

When one surrenders to Christ, the mind is brought under the control of the law; but it is the royal law, which proclaims liberty to every captive. By becoming one with Christ, man is made free. Subjection to the will of Christ means restoration to perfect manhood. {MH 131.1}

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. {MB 109.2}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of

this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. {FLB 62.8}

He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God’s saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a “God of gods,” able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him. {CC 252.5}

Christ revealed all of God that sinful human beings could bear without being destroyed. He is the divine Teacher, the Enlightener. Had God thought us in need of revelations other than those made through Christ and in His written word, He would have given them. {8T 266.1}