

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2021: *Isaiah: “Comfort My People”*

Lesson 2 “Crisis of Leadership”

Read for this week’s study

Isaiah 6:1–4; Isaiah 6:5–7; Isaiah 6:8; Isaiah 6:9–13.

Memory Text

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple” (Isaiah 6:1, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The King Is Dead. Long Live the King!
- III. “Holy, Holy, Holy” (*Isaiah 6:1–4*)
- IV. New Personality (*Isaiah 6:5–7*)
- V. Royal Commission (*Isaiah 6:8*)
- VI. Appalling Appeal (*Isaiah 6:9–13*)
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Isaiah 6:1 talks about the death of King Uzziah. Read 2 Chronicles 26 to answer the question: What is the significance of King Uzziah’s death? Read 2 Chronicles 26:16 again. In what ways do each of us face the potential of making the same mistake? How does truly knowing God help us to avoid that kind of pitfall? (Sunday’s lesson)
2. Read Isaiah 6:1-4. Where is God located in this vision? Why would God appear to Isaiah in this place rather than somewhere else? See also Exodus 25:8; 40:34-38. Have you ever caught a glimpse of the glory of the Lord? Under what circumstances did that happen? (Monday’s lesson)
3. Read Isaiah 6:5-7. How does Isaiah react to the vision of God’s presence and how did God respond to his reaction? Why did the seraph use a live, burning coal from the altar to cleanse Isaiah’s lips? What is so special about burning coals? What do you think this scene represents? (Tuesday’s lesson)
4. Read Isaiah 6:8. What happens next between Isaiah and God? How is Isaiah’s prophetic beginning different from that of Jeremiah and Ezekiel? Jeremiah 1:4-10;

Ezekiel 3:1-4. How does Isaiah's encounter with God compare with Moses and Elijah? Exodus 34:5-7 and 1 Kings 19:11-12. Why does the author of Hebrews invite people to enter God's presence "boldly"? See Hebrews 4:16 and 10:19-22. (Wednesday's lesson)

5. Read Isaiah 6:9-10. When God recommissioned Isaiah, why did He give the prophet such a strange message to take to His people? Why do you think the people are so resistant to God's message? Read John 12:37-41 for John's interpretation of Isaiah 6. (Thursday's lesson)
6. If a skeptic or an atheist challenged you with the question, "How can you show that your God is in charge?" what would you answer? (Friday's lesson)
7. If God is in charge, why do innocent people suffer? How can we reconcile our understanding of God's character with the bad that happens to people? Do we need to reconcile them? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: It's part of our problem, then, that we are taking models from our legal system here and trying to apply them to God.

Graham: That's a very good point.

Lou: The "substitutionary," that comes in, say more about that. The "vicarious."

Graham: Ah. He died in our stead. He died as the substitution. In a way, it's very true. I mean, either he dies or we die. However that's where the comparison ends, because if God has let you and me and all other sinners die, all it would have done is prove the truthfulness of his warning, "If you sin, you will die." And God could say to the universe, "Was I right? I said sinners would die, and look, they're dead." But the universe would not have had answers to questions two and three that I just mentioned. When Jesus died, there was no doubt in the minds of the universe that God was not killing his Son. They were clear about that. And the death of Christ answers all those three questions. So it's not either us or him. His death was infinitely more significant than ours. But had he not died, then what else could God do but leave us to reap the consequences and we all would have died. So in a sense, yes. He died in our stead, but beyond that there's no comparison.

Lou: But not as a payoff. It's not one or the other.

Graham: It's not his death is equal to all of ours. His death is infinitely more significant than the death of every sinful man or angel who has ever lived. The death of angels and men would not have answered the questions.

Lou: What you're saying then, is that just a simple satisfaction idea doesn't encompass what's involved at all, does it?

Graham: Oh, it makes it much too small. I think it puts God in a very bad light, and it doesn't answer the questions of the Great Controversy.

Many folk who prefer those understandings of the plan of salvation do not understand there has been a universe-wide great controversy over the character and government of God. And do you remember at our first meeting, I brought along the evidence that even Luther, hero of the Christian world that he is, could not conceive of these larger issues because he couldn't include the book of Revelation—let alone Hebrews, James and Jude. And this has been the pattern through the years. Not many have seen the sixty-sixth book picture of a universe-wide controversy over the character and government of God. And so they have seen the death of Christ as primarily a plan just to save you and me, for which we are very grateful. It's just that the larger view makes the cross much more significant. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #8 with Lou Venden, "The Most Costly And Convincing 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/8MMCAG>*

Is there a verse in the Bible that says that when Jesus died, he was given up? Romans 4:25 says Christ was given up for our transgressions. And many versions, with their reformation influence, translate this "Christ was put to death." There is nothing in there about being put to death; it says he was given up. To tie that in with the issue in the Great Controversy, God gave up his Son as if he were a sinner—just as he will give us up, if we are real sinners at the end—because you can't force people to trust you. In a free universe, what can you do but give people up. When Jesus was given up, yes, he died.

So I believe there were three questions answered by Gethsemane and the cross. One: who is right, God or the devil? Is God a liar when he says sin results in death? The devil says, "Yes, God has lied to you." "You will not die" is the teaching of the devil. God says, "You will die. But, it is not torture and execution at my hands." The devil developed the whole doctrine of hell to turn the universe against God. And God says that is not true. And I say, "Well, how do I know how the wicked are going to die?" He says, "Only one person has ever died the death as a result of sin. It's only happened once in all eternity. I died that death. I wouldn't ask any of you to prove the truthfulness of my word." This is the meaning of substitutionary death. Yes, he died in our place, but not for legal reasons. He died because he wouldn't think of asking anybody else to go through that painful experience to demonstrate the truth. Besides, our death wouldn't have answered it anyway because if our dying would have answered the question, then he might as well have let Lucifer die in the beginning.

But you remember the explanation. 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—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.”

On Calvary, Jesus was tortured to death. By whom? The most devout, blueprinting Adventists the world has ever known. Absolutely dedicated to God, the scriptures, creation, Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, you name it. Jesus said you even strain gnats out of your goat’s milk—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 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 think 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 some of the Jews did, and become his enemies.

So I believe the cross was the only way to answer the questions. Without answers to the questions, there would be no peace, no freedom, no security throughout the universe. So it was for these specific reasons. {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/2MMQUESTP> (Part 2)

How would you like to have God say, “Which one of you would like to go for me; would any of you be willing to go for me and speak in my behalf?” Well, Jeremiah was willing, though it cost him quite a lot. Isaiah was willing. Job was willing. And after Job did it, God said, “You’ve said of me what is right.”

I said, “Here am I! Send me.” And he said, “Go, and say to this people [who are in such a terrible condition that they’re almost beyond healing; I’m going to have to let them go. Say to this people]: Hear and hear, but do not understand; see and see, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”

Now, does that put God in a very good light? Is it that he didn’t want them to understand, so he says to Isaiah, “Go to these people and make it harder for them to understand”? Didn’t Jesus also use the same words? What would this mean? What should we do with a passage like that? It looks as if God is just shutting their eyes and hardening their hearts. Now, that reminds us, doesn’t it, of the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart? And we’ve discussed that before, and many other similar places. How did God harden Pharaoh’s heart? You turn back to Exodus, and you remember? Within about two inches of text it says, “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened”, “Pharaoh hardened his own heart”, and “God hardened Pharaoh’s heart”. And all three were said by Moses, a very brilliant man, under inspiration. And there was no contradiction.

How did God harden Pharaoh’s heart? Isn’t it that he came to him with revelation, with evidence, of a kind that Pharaoh would be impressed with? And Pharaoh could have said yes. We know he hadn’t forgotten the word ‘yes’, because when the firstborn died he said yes; and then took it back and said no. So he hadn’t forgotten how to do it. But in his stubbornness he refused to give in. So God did harden his heart by bringing him light and truth and opportunity. He could have said yes and his heart been softened. He said no, and his heart was hardened. We harden our own hearts. But by bringing truth, spoken to us in love, God does precipitate the necessity for decision making. And in a sense then, he does hasten the hardening of our hearts.

But it’s not his fault. He came only with light and truth, and invites us, please, to say yes. But we’re free to say no. And isn’t this the case here? Or anyone have a question about this? It comes up many times in the Bible. When we get to Romans, Paul really deals with this again. God wants them to understand. In fact, he’s been deploring the fact that they don’t. So Jesus says, “I come as light; I’ve come with truth. I’m going to give my life so you can understand. Because we’re not willing that any of you be lost, but that all should come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved. But many of you refuse to listen. You will not understand, and so I cannot help you.” The fact that it comes up so often in the Bible, don’t you think helps us understand the language that’s used. Or does anyone have a question about that? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Isaiah, recorded January

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/33MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/34MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, can carry forward His great work harmoniously. That which appears to finite minds entangled and complicated, the Lord's hand can keep in perfect order. He can devise ways and means to thwart the purposes of wicked men, and He will bring to confusion the counsels of them that plot mischief against His people. {5T 754.2}

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 whole Satanic force there is not power to overcome one soul who in simple trust casts himself on Christ. {COL 157.3}

There is by our side a witness, a heavenly messenger, who will lift up for us a standard against the enemy. He will shut us in with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Beyond this Satan cannot penetrate. He cannot pass this shield of holy light. {COL 171.3}

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and his teaching in our past history. {RH, October 12, 1905 par. 22}

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. {MH 479.2}

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. The eye of faith will discern God very near, and the suppliant may obtain precious evidence of the divine love and care for him. {GW 257.1}

Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly

going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1076.2}

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. {1T 340.2}

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

While engaged in our daily work, we should lift the soul to heaven in prayer. These silent petitions rise like incense before the throne of grace; and the enemy is baffled. The Christian whose heart is thus stayed upon God cannot be overcome. No evil arts can destroy his peace. All the promises of God's word, all the power of divine grace, all the resources of Jehovah, are pledged to secure his deliverance. {GW 254.2}

Christ had not exchanged His divinity for humanity; but He had clothed His divinity in humanity (RH Oct. 29, 1895). {5BC 1128.3}

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity, and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, He who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone able to reveal the character of the Deity to mankind. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {MH 422.2}

Christ stands before us as the pattern Man, the great Medical Missionary—an example for all who should come after. His love, pure and holy, blessed all who came within the sphere of its influence. His character was absolutely perfect, free from the slightest stain of sin. He came as an expression of the perfect love of God, not to crush, not to judge and condemn, but to heal every weak, defective character, to save men and woman from Satan's power. {MM 20.1}

Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always there, one given in Christ's place, to act in His stead. He is always at our right hand, to speak soothing, gentle words, to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. This Spirit works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of this Spirit reveal its fruit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. {TMK 171.5}

With the trusting faith of a little child, we are to come to our heavenly Father, telling Him of all our needs. He is always ready to pardon and help. The supply of divine wisdom is inexhaustible, and the Lord encourages us to draw largely from it. {SD 121.3}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. {TMK 57.2}

God had power to hold Adam back from touching the forbidden fruit; but had He done this, Satan would have been sustained in his charge against God's arbitrary rule. Man would not have been a free moral agent, but a mere machine (RH June 4, 1901). {1BC 1084.2}

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. {MB 142.1}

It is not the plan of God to compel men to yield their wicked unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which to accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture (*Redemption: or the Miracles of Christ*, pp. 112, 113). {1BC 1120.5}