

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**First Quarter 2021: *Isaiah: “Comfort My People”***  
**Lesson 12 “Desire of Nations”**

**Read for this week’s study**

Isaiah 59; Isaiah 59:15–21; Isaiah 60:1, 2; Isaiah 61; Isaiah 61:2.

**Memory Text**

“The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising” (Isaiah 60:3, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. The Effects of Sin (*Isaiah 59*)
- III. Who Is Forgiven? (*Isaiah 59:15–21*)
- IV. Universal Appeal (*Isaiah 60:1, 2*)
- V. “The Year of the Lord’s Favor” (*Isaiah 61:2, NRSV*)
- VI. “The Day of Vengeance of Our God” (*Isaiah 61:2, NRSV*)
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Facilitator: Daniel Duda**

1. “We must believe the naked promise, and not accept feeling for faith. When we trust God fully, when we rely upon the merits of Jesus as a sin-pardoning Saviour, we shall receive all the help that we can desire.’ (*Faith and Works* 36). This week we can see more of this great truth as revealed in the writings of the prophet Isaiah.” (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. What sin dynamic is revealed in Isaiah 59:1-8 (cf. 58:1-3; 64:12-65:1)? What does it reveal about God, ourselves, and the nature of sin? How can it be misunderstood?
3. God yearns for and actively seeks a saving relationship with all his children, but leaves the choice entirely with them. Some take paths in life that lead them further and further away from God, yet still want to maintain the appearance of a relationship with him. “Sin can destroy our relationship with the Lord and thus lead to our eternal ruin—not because sin drives God away from us but that it drives us away from God.” (Sunday’s lesson)

4. Who is the Divine Warrior (15b-21), presented as a solution for the problem of sin (56:9-59:15a)? Why is he portrayed in starkly different terms than the suffering Servant of 52:13-53:12? How does salvation address both the guilt and the power of sin? How does Paul pick up this imagery in Ephesians 6:10-17?
5. What is Isaiah 60:1-22 talking about? How does the Warrior's work enable the light of God to shine through redeemed Israel? What is the purpose of all this (60:3; cf. 56:1-8; 66:18-24)? What caused the dramatic contrast between the darkness of sin in Israel (56:9-59:15a) with Israel as a bearer of God's light (60:1, 3, 19, 20)?
6. What is Isaiah 61:1-2 talking about (cf. 42:1-7)? (Wednesday's lesson) How does it function in the structure of chapters 56-66? How does Jesus embody both the suffering Servant (52:13-53:12) and the Divine Warrior (59:15b-21; 63:1-6) in healing the guilt (condemnation) of our sins and breaking the power of sin?
7. How is "the year of the Lord's favor" (61:2) connected with the Jubilee (Leviticus 25:9-55) and what comes beyond? (see Luke 4:16-21) How can Jesus and the Holy Spirit accomplish that today through the community that bears God's name?
8. How do "the year of the Lord's favor" and "the day of vengeance of our God" go together (mentioned in the same verse 61:2)? How is that connected with the "great and terrible day of the Lord" (Joel 2:21; Malachi 4:5)? Why did Jesus stop before reading the second? What is the theological significance of it?
9. "How do you reconcile the notion of a loving God with a God who also promises vengeance? Are the ideas incompatible? Or do you understand vengeance as a manifestation of that love? If so, how so? Explain your answer." (Thursday's lesson)
10. If Isaiah is a reinterpretation of earlier eschatology, how does the New Testament and Revelation specifically reinterpret Isaiah? Which one do we take as God's final word? How do we make sure that we are open to what God wants to teach us in each age (and each stage of development)?
11. How can the lessons of Isaiah 55-66 help us to be the community God longs to have on this planet and escape the narrow exclusivism that can easily be associated with remnant theology? How can recognizing the past mistakes of God's people help us to not repeat them now? Why can seeing the big picture be helpful in this regard?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

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)

And that's why Jesus told the prodigal son story. When did the father forgive the prodigal son? Even as he helped him pack his bags to leave. And the greatest discovery the prodigal son made was—half way through his speech of repentance—that his father had long since forgiven him. The message of forgiveness is simply part of the revelation of the truth about God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Ephesians and Colossians, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/68MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

When do you think the prodigal son really came to know his father, and the kindness of his father led him to real repentance? Don't you think it's after he discovered he'd been forgiven? Which comes first, forgiveness or repentance? In a sense, the forgiveness is offered, and some of us are won by that to repentance. If we're legalists, you have to do it all in the right order, you know, or God can't do it. He's not that kind of a God. He wants us to come home all the time, not willing that any of his children should be lost, but that all should come to repentance. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke, recorded

April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Sin really changes us. The legalist thinks he can go and get it just covered or erased or forgiven or pardoned or forgotten. That's legalism. But to recognize that sin damages us, we're never the same. Adam and Eve were never the same. They were hurt by this thing. They could not pass on a perfect nature to their children. They were weakened by this thing. That's why it's suicide to sin. I mean the reasons for sin are not just it upsets our righteous heavenly Father. It also is utterly destructive too and he does not wish us to destroy ourselves. There's every reason for not sinning. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, *We've Camped Around This Mountain Long Enough, #1*, recorded July 1989, South Dakota Conference Ministers Meeting} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAMPED>

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

God does not compel men to give up their unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which they will 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. {DA 458.3}

Sin not only shuts away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. {PK 233.1}

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 every thing 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 mistrusted his goodness and cherished the words of Satan. {3SG 43.1}

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed. It was the tempter's purpose to thwart the divine plan in

man's creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God's work in creating man. {SC 17.1}

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 enemy cannot overcome the humble learner of Christ, the one who walks prayerfully before the Lord. Christ interposes Himself as a shelter, a retreat, from the assaults of the wicked one. The promise is given, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." . . . {ML 316.2}

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}

The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love. . . . To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. . . . {AG 23.3}

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal" (Romans 16:25, R.V.). It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. . . . God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." {AG 23.4}

When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit. {ML 250.6}

By beholding Jesus we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength,

from character to character. He conforms to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ makes an end of the curse of sin, and sets the believing soul free from its action and effect. {1SM 395.1}

God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, quickens all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God, develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfil the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciples that the Christian becomes like his Master in character. He has clearer, broader views. His discernment is more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. So quickened is he by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. {SD 33.5}

God has provided divine assistance for all emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. He means that sufficient facilities shall be provided for the working out of his plans. {6T 414.3}

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant. So surely as there never was a time when God was not, so surely there never was a moment when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest His grace to humanity. {AG 130.2}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {TMK 366.4}

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. {SC 68.1}

Arise and go to your Father. He will meet you a great way off. If you take even one step toward Him in repentance, He will hasten to enfold you in His arms of infinite love. His ear is open to the cry of the contrite soul. The very first reaching out of the heart after God is known to Him. Never a prayer is offered, however faltering, never a tear is shed, however secret, never a sincere desire after God is cherished, however feeble, but the Spirit of God goes forth to meet it. Even before the prayer is uttered or the yearning of the heart made known, grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul. {COL 206.1}

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. . . . {TDG 124.2}

God does not control our minds without our consent; but every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they may find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who consent to enter into covenant with God are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. . . . {MH 93.1}

Marvelous will be the transformation wrought in him who by faith opens the door of the heart to the Saviour. {MH 93.3}

Christ delights to take apparently hopeless material, those whom Satan has debased and through whom he has worked, and make them the subjects of His grace. He rejoices to deliver them from suffering and from the wrath that is to fall upon the disobedient. He makes His children His agents in the accomplishment of this work, and in its success, even in this life, they find a precious reward. {6T 308.3}

Every act, every word, is a seed that will bear fruit. Every deed of thoughtful kindness, of obedience, or of self-denial, will reproduce itself in others, and through them in still others. So every act of envy, malice, or dissension is a seed that will spring up in a "root of bitterness" (Hebrews 12:15), whereby many shall be defiled. {FLB 155.7}