

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2021: *The Promise: God's Everlasting Covenant*

Lesson 1 "What Happened?"

Read for this week's study

Psalm 100:3; Acts 17:26; Genesis 2:7, 18–25; Genesis 1:28, 29; Genesis 3:15.

Memory Text

"Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; . . .' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:26, 27, NRSV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Turtles All the Way Down . . .
- III. In the Image of the Maker (*Genesis 1:27*)
- IV. God and Humankind Together (*Genesis 1:28, 29*)
- V. At the Tree
- VI. Breaking the Relationship
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. We have a change of pace this quarter. Frequently Sabbath School lessons have been written by students of mine. But this quarter the Sabbath School department has reached back to a lesson written in the 1980s by a teacher of mine, Gerhard Hasel. He was a professor of Old Testament when I took the ministerial degree in the 1970s and he was Dean of the same Seminary (Andrews University) when I did my doctorate. In fact, he was the main influence in my decision to focus on New Testament and particularly the Book of Revelation. Later on, we taught together at the Seminary before his untimely death at the age of 59. Students used to say that when it came to covenant, they could get top grades in his class by studying notes from my class. So this quarter we get to collaborate once more. (Introduction for the Quarter)

2. Read Genesis 1:26-28. The concept of covenant is all about relationship. What three relationships does this text imply Adam and Eve were created to enjoy? In what way does the marriage covenant impact the marriage relationship? What kind of relationship did God wish to have with human beings? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
3. Read Genesis 1:1. Two of the great philosophical questions are: "Where did we come from?" and "Why are we here?" What answer does this verse give to those questions? What scientific evidence is there that the universe was put together by an intelligent Designer? (Sunday Afternoon's Lesson)
4. Read Genesis 1:26-27. What does it mean that God created us in His own image? In what ways are we in His image? What does that tell us about our status with God? In what ways are human beings different from animals? (Monday's Lesson)
5. Read Genesis 1:28-29. What amazing gift does God give to the human race here? How are we to relate to the material world? What does it mean that God blessed Adam and Eve? (Tuesday's Lesson)
6. Read Genesis 2:16-17. What does the Tree of Knowledge signify? What was God's purpose for it? What does that purpose tell us about God? Was the command concerning the Tree given before or after sin? Why does God leave this deeper meaning hidden in the book of Genesis? How does the context of Genesis 2:7 impact our understanding of the relationship between God and the human race? How do you manage the tension between the "Thou shalt not" of Genesis 2:17 and God's desire for intimate relationship as stated in Genesis 1:26-28? (Wednesday's Lesson)
7. Read Genesis 3:1-6. We tend to believe people we know and distrust those we don't. But Eve ended up trusting the serpent, whom she didn't know, instead of God, whom she did know. How did Satan accomplish this feat? Do you see a difference between the sins of Adam and of Eve? See 1 Timothy 2:14. Read Genesis 3:15. How did the cross change everything? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. The word "covenant" doesn't actually appear in Genesis, chapters 1-3. Why then would a study of covenant begin with Genesis 1-3? Compare Genesis 9:1-3, 9 with Genesis 1:28-31. In the Garden work was intimately connected with Adam and Eve's relationship with God. How can we become better acquainted with God through our work today? (Friday's Lesson)
9. Contrast the biblical picture of humankind with that of the evolutionary theory of human origins. Which offers more hope, and why? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

In the book of Genesis, who was created in the image of God—man or woman? "In the image of God created he them." Both. It does seem, though, that the men at their very best bear certain God-like qualities, and the women at their very best bear certain God-like qualities, and

they're not the same. Sometimes we've been very happy for the difference! But when you see pictures of Christ, frequently the more gentle qualities come through; the ones for which we especially admire the women. I wish there were more pictures that would show what we regard as masculine qualities—you know, the force, the drive, the ambition, and the energy; not that that can't be shared by the women too, but we think of those as more masculine.

Isn't it that in God we have all these qualities in one Person, and it takes two persons, a man and a woman, really, to have all of these. But if we live together long enough, some of them will rub off, and if a marriage has been good, it will result in two whole persons. Haven't you noticed people who have been married for a long time how much they seem to be alike? A happy, prosperous marriage results in two whole people, not in the wife being lost in her husband. Besides, what is the image of God within us? The closest statement I can think of from Ellen White that represents the truth of scripture, is that every human being, man and woman, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the creator—individuality, power to think and to do. If marriage means that one member of the partnership gives up his or her individuality, then that marriage has served to destroy the image of God in one or the other, and we wouldn't dare do that. So a good marriage would result in two individuals with power to think and to do. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Exodus*, 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/3MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

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 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 days two, three, four, 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. And 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 Eve would see it every time they came to that other tree.

Look in Genesis 2:9: "In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (NIV)

Of course the God we know could be trusted not to allow our first inexperienced parents to be tested more than they were able to resist. You know he would not do that. And so Satan was only allowed to approach them at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve were warned not to risk a confrontation with their wily foe. Isn't that the meaning of that famous key text in 1 Corinthians 10:13? "But God keeps his promise [or God can be trusted], and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm." (GNB)

You see, that tree was not put there as a test of obedience—an arbitrary test of obedience. That tree was put there to help them, to protect them. The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was not placed there before sin, but after sin. If it was before sin, it was an arbitrary test. After sin, it was to help them and protect them like every other one of God's gracious laws. {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

The Saviour in His miracles revealed the power that is continually at work in man's behalf, to sustain and to heal him. Through the agencies of nature, God is working, day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, to keep us alive, to build up and restore us. When any part of the body sustains injury, a healing process is at once begun; nature's agencies are set at work to restore soundness. But the power working through these agencies is the power of God. All life-giving power is from Him. When one recovers from disease, it is God who restores him. Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer. {FLB 165.5}

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}

God's created works testify to His love and power. He has called the world into being, with all that it contains. God is a lover of the beautiful; and in the world which He has fitted up for us He has not only given us everything necessary for our comfort, but He has filled the heavens and the earth with beauty. We see His love and care in the rich fields of autumn, and His smile in the glad sunshine. His hand has made the castle-like rocks and the towering mountains. The lofty trees grow at His command; He has spread earth's green velvet carpet and dotted it with shrubs and flowers. {CT 185.1}

The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God. {Ed 126.4}

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. {MH 415.1}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures. {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}

Infinite love—how great it is! God made the world to enlarge heaven. He desires a larger family of created intelligences (MS 78, 1901). {1BC 1081.2}

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made “in the image of God,” and it was the Creator’s design that they should populate the earth (RH Feb. 11, 1902). {1BC 1081.3}

Next to the angelic beings, the human family, formed in the image of God, are the noblest of His created works. God desires them to become all that He has made it possible for them to be, and to do their very best with the powers He has given them. {MH 397.1}

To the dwellers in Eden was committed the care of the garden, “to dress it and to keep it.” Their occupation was not wearisome, but pleasant and invigorating. God appointed labor as a blessing to man, to occupy his mind, to strengthen his body, and to develop his faculties. In mental and physical activity Adam found one of the highest pleasures of his holy existence. {PP 50.1}

It was taught by the Jews that before God’s love is extended to the sinner, he must first repent. In their view, repentance is a work by which men earn the favor of Heaven. And it was this thought that led the Pharisees to exclaim in astonishment and anger. “This man receiveth sinners.” According to their ideas He should permit none to approach Him but those who had repented. But in the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God’s seeking after us. “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way.” Romans 3:11, 12. We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent. {COL 189.1}

The rabbis had a saying that there is rejoicing in heaven when one who has sinned against God is destroyed; but Jesus taught that to God the work of destruction is a strange work. That in which all heaven delights is the restoration of God’s own image in the souls whom He has made. {COL 190.1}

Jesus says, “My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” The peace spoken of by the great Teacher is larger and fuller than we have imagined. Christ is ready to do large things for us, to restore our natures by making us partakers of His divine nature. He waits to link our hearts with His heart of infinite love, in order that we may be fully reconciled to God; but it is our privilege to understand that God loves us as He loves His Son. When we believe in Christ as our personal Saviour, the peace of Christ is ours. {LHU 332.2}

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}

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}

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}

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}

Had Christ come in His divine form, humanity could not have endured the sight. The contrast would have been too painful, the glory too overwhelming. Humanity could not have endured the presence of one of the pure, bright angels from glory; therefore Christ took not on Him the nature of angels; He came in the likeness of men. {5BC 1131.1}

What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words, His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. Divinity flashed through humanity in softening, subduing light. He was the embodiment of the law of God, which is the transcript of His character (MS 77, 1899). {5BC 1131.6}

Christ exposed Satan's falsehoods and deceiving character, and in many hearts destroyed his corrupting influence. It was this that stirred Satan with such intense hatred. With his hosts of fallen beings he determined to urge the warfare most vigorously; for there stood in the world One who was a perfect representative of the Father, One whose character and practices refuted Satan's misrepresentation of God. Satan had charged upon God the attribute he himself possessed. Now in Christ he saw God revealed in His true character—a compassionate, merciful

Father, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Him in repentance, and have eternal life. {1SM 254.3}

The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. A lost sheep never finds its way back to the fold of itself. If it is not sought for and saved by the watchful shepherd, it wanders until it perishes. What a representation of the Saviour is this! Unless Jesus, the Good Shepherd, had come to seek and to save the wandering, we should have perished. {LHU 212.3}

The father of the prodigal son is the type that Christ chooses as a representation of God. This father longs to see and receive once more the son who has left him. He waits and watches for him, yearning to see him, hoping that he will come. When he sees a stranger approaching, poor and clothed with rags, he goes out to meet him, if perchance it may be his son. And he feeds and clothes him as if he were indeed his son. By and by he has his reward, for his son comes home, on his lips the beseeching confession, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." And the father says to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry" (Luke 15:21-23). {HP 10.3}

There is no taunting, no casting up to the prodigal of his evil course. The son feels that the past is forgiven and forgotten, blotted out forever. And so God says to the sinner, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins" (Isaiah 44:22). "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). . . . {HP 10.4}

The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness. Through influences seen and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him. To all these souls, who are vainly seeking to drink from the broken cisterns of this world, the divine message is addressed, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. {SC 28.1}