

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Second Quarter 2021: *The Promise: God's Everlasting Covenant*
Lesson 3 "All Future Generations"

Read for this week's study

Genesis 3:6; Genesis 6:5, 11; Genesis 6:18; Genesis 9:12–17; Isaiah 4:3; Revelation 12:17.

Memory Text

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:8).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Sin Principle (*Genesis 6:5*)
- III. The Man Noah (*Genesis 6:9*)
- IV. Covenant With Noah
- V. Sign of the Rainbow
- VI. "Only Noah Was Left"
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The core of this lesson is the Primeval History (Genesis 1-11) in general and the Flood story (Genesis 6-9) in particular. Read Genesis 6:8. Why didn't the eyes of the Lord find grace in all the antediluvians? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
2. How do the texts between the Fall and the Flood illustrate the steady progression of sin? Read Genesis 3:6, 11-13; 4:5, 8, 19, 23; 6:2, 5, 11. As one reads through Genesis 4-11 what major themes stand out? When God acts in judgment in these passages, that judgment always has two sides, a salvation side and a restraining side (see Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the Flood). The restraining side of God's judgment is seen in the scattering of the human race and the confusion of their languages. Where is the blessing or salvation in the Tower of Babel story? (Sunday's Lesson)
3. Amid all the evil in the antediluvian world, Noah stands out as very different. Read Genesis 6:9. What three things does this text say about Noah and what do each of these mean? Read Genesis 6:8. What does grace mean in this context? (Monday's Lesson)

4. Read Genesis 6:18. This is the first reference to the Hebrew word for covenant (*berith*) in the Bible. What are the basic elements of the covenant expressed here? Why does God describe it as “my covenant” rather than “our covenant”? What does the ark have to do with the covenant? What do you think would have happened had so many people wanted to enter the ark that there was no room for everyone? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
5. Read Genesis 9:12-17. What does the text say that the “rainbow” would symbolize? What does the rainbow have to do with the covenant? With whom is God making this covenant and what obligations are required in return? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
6. Read Genesis 7:23. This is the first mention of a Hebrew word for “remnant” in the Bible. Given the context, what do you think is the core meaning of the term in the Old Testament context? What implications does that have for our understanding of remnant today? How does the covenant fit in with the idea of the remnant? (Thursday’s Lesson)
7. In the *Gilgamesh Epic* of ancient Mesopotamia, the gods decide to exterminate the human race because they became so populous and noisy that the gods couldn’t sleep any more. How does awareness of this parallel story impact the way you view God’s actions in the Flood? (Friday’s Lesson)
8. The purpose of Noah’s warnings to his generation was to help the people sense their need of salvation, which in that context was available only in the ark. Why are the truths of salvation generally unpopular in nearly every context? What kinds of things hinder people from accepting God’s offers of salvation? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Well, what do you think of a God who doesn’t just discipline; he drowns all but eight? Why did he do that? Well, supposing he hadn’t? Hadn’t God almost lost contact there with the human race? He was down to eight, and they weren’t outstanding. Ham had problems. Even Noah had not taken the temperance pledge yet, remember?

God must have had to say to his family, “Bear with me; I’m about to do something very terrible.” And they watched. But when it was all over, Noah was willing to listen. And who was descended from Noah, but Abraham, and Abraham was one of the best friends God ever had, and God worked through Abraham. But that wasn’t the end; there were others yet to come. There was much yet to happen. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Genesis*, recorded October 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/1MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

The devil is an Adventist, you know. And it scares him. He knows God is coming soon, and it terrifies him to think of it. So there's a faith that God is *not* looking for. But that is the kind of faith that a show of power may unfortunately produce. It is not enough.

And for a dramatic illustration of how power can be misunderstood; look at the story in Genesis 9 and 11. You remember that after the Flood: "God said to Noah and his sons. . . . 'I promise that never again will all living things be destroyed by a flood.'" What a demonstration of God's power the Flood was. Did it win people? Was everyone so convinced by that display of power that no one ever distrusted him again? God went on to Noah, "As a sign of this everlasting covenant which I am making with you and with all living things, I am putting my bow in the clouds."

"At first, the people of the whole world had only one language. . . . And they said to one another . . . 'Now let's build a city with a tower that reaches the sky.'" (GNB) Now these inhabitants of Babel, did they believe in God? Did they believe in His power? Did they believe he had the power to drown the whole world in a flood? Did they believe his promise that he would never do it again? And so they built the tower. They didn't build the tower because they didn't believe in God, but because they *did* believe in God and it scared them that he has so much power. So perhaps we need not spend so much time discussing God's power, unless we don't believe that he has it. The Great Controversy is *not over power*, but over *who is telling the truth*. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, "God's Way Of Restoring Trust" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>*

I believe God has put millions of his children to sleep. But it's alright for him to do it. He loves them as he does it and he resurrects them every one. Not all in the resurrection of the savable, to be sure. The first death is not the end, it's just a sleep. And all will awaken. Those who were drowned in the Flood awake in the next moment in the appropriate resurrection. And were they all wicked? Might there be some little girl who said to her father, "Daddy, take me to the boat, quick Daddy, take me to the boat"? And he never took her to the boat and she drowned. We may meet her in the resurrection of the just.

But nothing says they all were drowned because they were bad. Oh, by and large, they were a terrible bunch, there's no question. God could no longer communicate with them. But did he save the eight in the boat because they were so good? Ham so good? Even Noah hadn't taken the temperance pledge yet. You remember the stories? God saved the eight because they got on the boat, that's why. And anybody could have gotten on the boat—bad and good they could have gotten on the boat. Sadly only eight.

But how could God do such a terrible thing? What was his alternative? Just leave them alone? In no time at all there would have been no one left on this planet with whom he could communicate. And the most important things were yet to come. God preserved his opportunity to communicate with the human race in that most dramatic way. And through those eight there came his friend Abraham. And through the descendants of Abraham has come the clearest revelation of the truth about God the universe will ever see or ever need. Even Jesus came from the descendants of Abraham. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, God's Use of Power, #2, "The History of God's Use of Power" recorded March 1985, Kettering, Ohio} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/2MMOHIO>

Further Study with Ellen White

All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against man. He does not make man spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable man to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force man to receive truth. He leaves him free to choose the good or to choose the evil. {6BC 1112.5}

Men put God out of their knowledge and worshiped the creatures of their own imagination; and as the result, they became more and more debased. The psalmist describes the effect produced upon the worshiper by the adoration of idols. He says, "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." Psalm 115:8. It is a law of the human mind that by beholding we become changed. Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower. {PP 91.2}

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}

Sin not only shuts away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. Through sin, the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted; the faculties of the soul are degraded. There is an

absence of pure religion, of heart holiness. The converting power of God has not wrought in transforming the character. The soul is weak, and for want of moral force to overcome, is polluted and debased. {PK 233.1}

When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. "God created man in His own image" (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase. Vast was the scope offered for their exercise, glorious the field opened to their research. The mysteries of the visible universe—the "wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)—invited man's study. Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his high privilege. Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever. Throughout eternal ages he would have continued to gain new treasures of knowledge, to discover fresh springs of happiness, and to obtain clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God. More and more fully would he have fulfilled the object of his creation, more and more fully have reflected the Creator's glory. {Ed 15.1}

But by disobedience this was forfeited. Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated. Man's physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. He had become subject to death. {Ed 15.2}

The Lord's angels are appointed to keep strict watch over those who put their faith in the Lord, and these angels are to be our special help in every time of need. Every day we are to come to the Lord with full assurance of faith, and to look to Him for wisdom. . . . Those who are guided by the Word of the Lord will discern with certainty between falsehood and truth, between sin and righteousness (MS 43, 1907). {7BC 907.1}

There is one safeguard against Satan's deceptions and snares, that is the truth as it is in Jesus. The truth planted in the heart, nourished by watchfulness and prayer, nourished by the grace of Christ, will give us discernment. {TMK 301.4}

It was by deception that Satan seduced angels; thus he has in all ages carried forward his work among men, and he will continue this policy to the last. Should he openly profess to be warring against God and His law, men would beware; but he disguises himself, and mixes truth with error. The most dangerous falsehoods are those that are mingled with truth. It is thus that errors are received that captivate and ruin the soul. By this means Satan carries the world with him. But a day is coming when his triumph will be forever ended. {PP 338.3}

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}

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). {AG 223.3}

The whole world is embraced in the contract of the great plan of redemption (MS 65, 1912). {4BC 1180.5}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. “The truth shall make you free;” and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one's self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is “the law of liberty.” James 2:12. {DA 466.5}

Satan is constantly urging men to accept his principles. Thus he seeks to counterwork the work of God. He is constantly representing the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power he is constantly using against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the result of obedience to right principles. {6T 11.2}

But when we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure. {COL 363.1}

Promises are estimated by the truth of the one who makes them. Many men make promises only to break them, to mock the heart that trusted in them. Those who lean upon such men lean upon broken reeds. But God is behind the promises He makes. He is ever mindful of His covenant, and His truth endureth to all generations (MS 23, 1899). {7BC 942.12}

I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble; and every soul that was decided on the truth and was pure in heart was to be covered with the covering of the Almighty. {EW 43.2}

If you will ask help of God you need not ask in vain. In order to encourage us to have confidence and trust He comes near us by His holy Word and Spirit, and seeks in a thousand ways to win our confidence. But in nothing does He take more delight than in receiving the weak who come to Him for strength. If we will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to find an ear to hear and an arm to save. {TDG 194.5}

The character of God as revealed by Christ invites our faith and love, for we have a Father whose mercy and compassion fail not. At every step of our journey heavenward He will be with us to guide in every perplexity, to give us help in every temptation. {HP 16.4}