

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

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

Lesson 12 "Covenant Faith"

Read for this week's study

Galatians 6:14; Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:11, 13; Romans 4:1-7; Leviticus 7:18; Leviticus 17:1-4; Romans 5:1.

Memory Text

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:11).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Reflections of Calvary
- III. The Covenant and the Sacrifice
- IV. The Faith of Abraham: Part 1
- V. The Faith of Abraham: Part 2
- VI. Resting on the Promises
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "In one sense, we are on a long journey home. However, we can never 'suffer enough' to earn our way back. The distance between heaven and earth is too great for us to atone for our mistakes. If we get home, it would have to be only by the grace of God." (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Why do so many religions have the idea that people can somehow "atone" for their sins? Where does this "karma" thinking come from? What are the consequences of believing this model of salvation?
3. "Why could only Someone equal with God ransom our souls?" (Sabbath afternoon) What model of salvation is this based on? What does the Bible mean when it uses the metaphor of "ransom"?
4. Why must salvation be a gift? How is that connected with the origin and nature of sin?

5. “When men and women can more fully comprehend the magnitude of the great sacrifice which was made by the Majesty of heaven in dying in man’s stead, then will the plan of salvation be magnified, and reflections of Calvary will awaken tender, sacred, and lively emotions in the Christian’s heart. Praises to God and the Lamb will be in their hearts and upon their lips. Pride and self-esteem cannot flourish in the hearts that keep fresh in memory the scenes of Calvary.” (2T 212; Sunday’s lesson)
6. “The price was paid to purchase the redemption of man, when, in the last soul struggle, the blessed words were uttered which seemed to resound through creation: ‘It is finished.’” (2T 213; Sunday’s lesson)
7. How do we keep the objective and subjective aspects of salvation balanced and in mutual tension?
8. Monday’s lesson discusses the connection between the covenant and the sacrifice. When is the sacrifice introduced as a part of covenant? What is its role? What does Peter mean when he says that we were ransomed “with the precious blood of Christ, and not with silver or gold”? (1 Peter 1:18,19)
9. What do we learn about the faith of Abraham– “He believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness”? (Genesis 15:6) Why does the Bible say that it was “counted to” him or “credited to” him as righteousness?
10. How was this phrase or concept understood throughout the history of Christianity? Does it matter and why?
11. What does “resting on the promises” look like in everyday life? “The good news is that we don’t have to wait for the approach of death to have security in the Lord now. The whole covenant is based on the secure promises of God now, promises for us now, promises that can make our life better now.” (Thursday’s lesson)
12. In Paul’s New Testament understanding, faith is trust in God’s deliverance through Christ’s fidelity (faith[fulness] of Christ). Analogically the story of Abraham is not an unambiguous story of human faith, but rather the story of God’s faithfulness (to which Abraham responds with trust and [rather checkered] obedience).
13. There are different aspects of faith: *propositional* (assent to God’s revealed truths), *transcendental* (opening to new horizons or perspectives), *fiducial* (more trust, less cognitive), *practical* (hopeful action in solidarity with the suffering). How does an understanding of faith’s richness, help us to apply it in both individual and community life? How can the **mind and the will** be involved in “faith seeking understanding”?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

It is most significant to know that the word “salvation” means, essentially, healing. To be saved is to be healed. In one very legal understanding of the plan of salvation, to be saved is more to be forgiven; almost to have your fire insurance paid up, so you can be admitted. In the trust/healing model, salvation means healing the damage done. This is made plain in many places in Scripture.

Look at the next two examples on the list, of Luke 18:42, in two different versions. Jesus said to the blind man: “Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.” That’s the *King James Version*. But the *New International Version*, right underneath: “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #14, “God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done” 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/14MMCAG>

One view sees the plan of salvation and God’s gracious provisions, such as the death of Christ on the cross, as being primarily offered to adjust our legal standing in the sight of God because as sinners, we are guilty. And guilty as we are, justice and law demand that we be executed. And the only way to avoid being executed—and there are many, various explanations of execution; these are the various views of hell. We all have views of hell, the longer view, the medium view and the shorter view; there are many views of hell. But if God is the executioner, then we do well to be preoccupied with our legal standing. And unless we be forgiven, he will go ahead and do this to us; he must. Law and justice require it. And if he doesn’t go through with this, the universe will conclude he is unjust. And if he’s unjust, you wouldn’t trust him, and now you’re getting over into the other view, which always amuses me, that if you pursue even the legal view logically to its conclusions you wind up with the other one.

But now in the larger view, which uses all sixty-six books and has no problems with Ellen White at all, it sees sin not as a legal problem. It sees sin as a very real problem that has had devastating consequences on us physically, mentally, spiritually, socially. Sin is a breach of trust, as Romans 14 says. Sin is treachery. Sin is what Lucifer did in the beginning, for which you could not have called him in before church counsel. I mean, what had he done? Nothing! Except the most devastating thing that can ever be done. Nearly destroyed the universe, that’s what he did. That’s how bad it was. And because of this distrust, and the consequential unwillingness to listen and allow God to look after us and heal the damage done, enormous damage has been done to sinners. **We’re not in legal trouble, we’re in trouble. We’re not in danger of being executed, we’re dying. That’s the difference.** And I believe it makes all the difference in the world. I would not go to a doctor who would kill his patients for not cooperating. But if I’m dying, I need a doctor. And if I go and don’t cooperate, I still may die. But my understanding is,

that in this larger view, this great controversy view, this sixty-six book view, we're all dying. And if God were to leave us alone, that's it.

But he hasn't. He's pursued us through the years, trying to win us back to trust. And of course, you don't expect people to trust without evidence. You don't make claims; you offer demonstrations; that's the content of the sixty-six books, God's demonstration of the kind of person he is. And the way he's handled this emergency is the greatest demonstration of all. As to, not how he treats his friends, but how he treats his enemies. How he treats the sick and the dying; how does he seek to win them back to trust? And some of us find that very wonderful.

So the purpose of the plan of salvation is not to adjust our legal standing, but the purpose of the plan of salvation is to win us back to trust so he can heal us, which he can readily do, and it is to confirm the trust of the onlooking universe. {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)

Suppose you had to keep rat poison. (We're having a lot of trouble with rats now.) So you had to keep rat poison in your house, and you have a young son. And if he touches it and then eats it, he could be very sick, even die. So you say, "Son, don't touch that rat poison." I'm going to put it on the highest shelf, the high and locked cupboard. A little later you hear a crash in the garage, and you run out, and there's your son lying on the floor. He's taken the rat poison and he's dying. Would it do any good to say, "Son, I forgive you, I forgive you!" He would just die forgiven, that's all. It wouldn't keep him from dying. Nor would it do any good to say, "Son, I don't want you to die, so let me drink the rat poison." And you both die. The boy doesn't need forgiveness. He needs an antidote. He needs healing.

But God didn't wait for that. God has said, "You really don't take me seriously, do you, that sin is like a poison and will lead to your death. Let me take the poison." And Jesus dies. And we, like the son, say, "Dad, it's real, isn't it! And nobody's killing you. Sin is really a poison, and you are dying. I will take you seriously from here on."

The beauty is that God then was able to take his life back and come out living. I've made my point. There's still no legal requirement in that. There's an awesome truth to be revealed. There's nothing arbitrary in this thing. God does not want us to poison ourselves. We need healing. Better heed the warning. The results of sin is death, and don't do this thing. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #12, "God's Law is no Threat

to Our Freedom” recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>*

Lou: But what about some of these others, though? The “satisfying of justice,” and “the demands of the law”?

Graham: Ah, those are the strongest ones. He died to satisfy the demands of the law. Now, what does the law demand? Well, the law seems to demand our love, which can’t be demanded anyway. There’s no way you can command love. And yet as Paul says, “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Jesus said the same. Moses said the same. So does the law say, “You either love God, and love each other, or you will be executed in the most painful way known to our heavenly Father?”

Some of our good Christian friends live under the awful weight of believing that God has said, “You either love and obey me, or you will be tortured in sulfurous flames for eternity.” That such good folk can still love God is a real tribute to them, not to God. I mean this is an awesome burden to live under. And yet because they love Jesus, they still love and are still faithful. And they will be in the Kingdom. And I think Jesus will love to introduce such people to the Father. He’ll say, “Would you like to meet the Father?” And they’ll say, “Well, if you will go with us.” He says, “There’s no need, but I’ll go with you.” And what a marvelous surprise to millions of these people, to meet the Father in the Kingdom, and discover that he is just as loving and gracious as the Son. This is what we want to deal with next week, “There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God.”

But “under the demands of law.” That belongs to a very legal conception of what has gone wrong in the universe, which we discussed in our second conversation. That what has gone wrong is that we have “broken the rules,” and the law demands that God execute us for breaking the rules. And Jesus died so that somehow God could justly forgive us even though we have broken the rules. I don’t think we have been able to make too much sense out of that. But it goes along with the other one, “satisfying justice.” Whose justice? I have friends who say, “If God does not give Idi Amin several days in the fire, I will not regard him as a just God.” They have that feeling about the satisfaction of justice. And I think they really mean it, and I would respect them for that. I would love to relieve them of that burden. If I want to know why Jesus died, I should go right to the cross and watch him die and hear his cry and see how the Father is involved, and then fit that back into scripture. I don’t see him fulfilling the requirements of a legal model.

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, very much so. {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>*

For hundreds of years, justification, and propitiation, and sanctification, and atonement, and imputed and imparted righteousness, and all these complex terms, (many of them heavy with Latin etymology) have only served to make the plan of healing and salvation more and more complicated. In fact, the plan of salvation can be spelled out in such complex detail that only a few initiates who understand this terminology really seem to have a grasp of what’s going on. I think that’s a gross perversion of the truth. Now—I should take that back a little. Grammarians do that with language; you know how they can spin it out. I have a grammar of the New Testament that must be five inches thick and it’s only one of scores of grammars, very complex. And the Greeks have been talking Greek without reading that volume all these years. It’s the same way with salvation. Children have been won back to faith and trust in God. And he’s forgiven them. And they’ve had peace with God. And they’ve grown up to be trusting boys and girls, and men and women. And they’ll be saved in his Kingdom, and they’ve never heard the words justification, sanctification, propitiation, expiation, dispensation, glorification, and they don’t know the difference between imputed and imparted righteousness, none of those terms. You see, some of them only listened to Jesus and they’ve never heard Paul.

Did you ever stop to think that Jesus never used those words? Do you mean that Jesus didn’t understand the *plan of salvation*? No one was saved under the ministry of Christ?

Jesus would say, “Come unto me, and let me save you and heal you. Trust my Father.” He said a lot about repentance, a lot about trust, a lot about forgiveness and being healed. He never talked about justification, sanctification, propitiation, expiation. He never used those words.

Don’t tell me Jesus had to read Paul later on to learn about the plan of salvation!—and this isn’t minimizing Paul. I think it’s just to warn us that Paul’s description of the plan of salvation is not the only description of the plan of salvation. Paul under inspiration described the plan of salvation magnificently, to a special audience who would understand these terms. Jesus talked to another audience. He talked about vines, he talked about agricultural things. He didn’t talk about law courts and law terminology.

So now we are in Romans, and we’re going to use these terms, but let’s remind ourselves constantly that one can be won back to faith in God without ever hearing one of these words. And I love to teach a class in righteousness by faith without using one of them, for weeks on end. And then when we’ve agreed that the everlasting good news about God shows that he’s worthy of our trust and faith—he stands ready to forgive, accept, and heal us; he wants us to have peace and be comfortable in his presence, and it only makes sense to listen to such a God and obey his advice and commands on every subject! Only when that’s all over do we say,

“Now, let’s see if we can sprinkle these terms along through here.” You could have the experience without ever using them. Let us not be tyrannized by theological terminology, especially terminology that Jesus never used. But then let’s be grateful (to be sure) that inspiration brought us Romans. To me, it’s the greatest book to explain all of this. But I don’t want to be tyrannized by the terms. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 3, recorded October 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/5MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/6MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. We do not see Christ and speak to Him, but His Holy Spirit is just as near us in one place as in another. It works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of the Spirit reveal the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (MS 41, 1897). {6BC 1112.1}

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness. {COL 386.1}

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan’s circle the poor souls who have been deluded by his deceptions. It places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. {COL 386.2}

Well, then, might the angels rejoice as they looked upon the Saviour’s cross; for though they did not then understand all, they knew that the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain, that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure. Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, “It is finished.” {DA 764.4}

Never was there such an evangelist as Christ. He was the Majesty of heaven, but He humbled Himself to take our nature, that He might meet men where they were. To all people, rich and poor, free and bond, Christ, the Messenger of the covenant, brought the tidings of salvation. His fame as the Great Healer spread throughout Palestine. The sick came to the places through which He would pass, that they might call on Him for help. Hither, too, came many anxious to

hear His words and to receive a touch of His hand. Thus He went from city to city, from town to town, preaching the gospel and healing the sick—the King of glory in the lowly garb of humanity. {MH 22.1}

For centuries God looked with patience and forbearance upon the cruel treatment given to his ambassadors, at his holy law prostrate, despised, trampled underfoot. He swept away the inhabitants of the Noachian world with a flood. But when the earth was again peopled, men drew away from God, and renewed their hostility to him, manifesting bold defiance. Those whom God rescued from Egyptian bondage followed in the footsteps of those who had preceded them. Cause was followed by effect; the earth was being corrupted.

{RH, July 17, 1900 par. 4}

A crisis had arrived in the government of God. . . All heaven was prepared at the word of God to move to the help of his elect. One word from him, and the bolts of heaven would have fallen upon the earth, filling it with fire and flame. God had but to speak, and there would have been thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes and destruction. {RH, July 17, 1900 par. 5}

With untold love our God has loved us, and our love awakens toward Him as we comprehend something of the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that passeth knowledge. By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith. {MB 76.3}

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}

The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the word of God: “Affliction shall not rise up the second time.” Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom. {GC 504.1}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and

benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. . . . {GC 541.3}

God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. {COL 84.4}

Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal. {Mar 302.7}

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. {DA 26.2}

Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men. {SC 10.3}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. {DA 25.3}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour. {COL 419.6}

You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You *believe* that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You *will* to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you. If you believe the promise,—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed,—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It *is* so if you believe it. {SC 51.1}

While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God. {DA 173.1}

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. {ST, June 16, 1890 par. 6}

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. {COL 311.4}

Christ has made every provision for us to be strong. He has given us His Holy Spirit, whose office is to bring to our remembrance all the promises that Christ has made, that we may have peace and a sweet sense of forgiveness. If we will but keep our eyes fixed on the Saviour and trust in His power, we shall be filled with a sense of security; for the righteousness of Christ will become our righteousness. {ML 45.5}

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. {COL 333.1}

By the grace of Christ, perform every duty that has been made plain to your understanding, and you will be enabled to understand and perform those of which you are now in doubt. {SC 111.2}

Christ undertook to redeem man and to rescue the world from the grasp of Satan. The great controversy begun in heaven was to be decided in the very world, on the very same field, that Satan claimed as his. {PP 69.2}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. No man has seen God at any time except as He is revealed through Christ. {8T 265.2}

Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things

testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. But not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it is revealed in Christ. {8T 265.4}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to reveal, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {8T 265.5}

The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." {DA 302.1}

When we receive Christ as an abiding guest in the soul, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. {MB 15.2}

But even here Christians may have the joy of communion with Christ; they may have the light of His love, the perpetual comfort of His presence. Every step in life may bring us closer to Jesus, may give us a deeper experience of His love, and may bring us one step nearer to the blessed home of peace. {FLB 121.5}