

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Fourth Quarter 2021: *Present Truth in Deuteronomy*

### Lesson 9 “Turn Their Hearts”

#### Read for this week’s study

Deuteronomy 5:22–29; Deuteronomy 4:25–31; Deuteronomy 30:1–10; Matthew 3:1–8;  
Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37, 38.

#### Memory Text

“ ‘But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul’ ” (Deuteronomy 4:29, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. Mi-Yitten
- III. Seek Me and Find Me
- IV. *Teshuvah*
- V. With All Your Heart
- VI. Repent and Be Converted
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Because we are sinful, repentance should be a central part of our Christian existence: acknowledging our sin, being sorry for it, asking God’s forgiveness for it and, ultimately, turning away from it. And, this week, we will see the idea of repentance as expressed in Deuteronomy.” (Sabbath afternoon) The lesson explores a topical study of repentance.
2. What is significant about the fact that God says: “If only their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always...”? (5:29) “What I would not give, if they would always feel this way...? (MSG) What does it tell us about what God is looking for and how he feels about us?
3. Monday’s lesson is based on Deuteronomy 4:25-31. Does it matter in which part of the book this section is found? If yes, why? What is Moses doing in chs. 1-4? Why does the new generation need to hear a pep talk like that? Why the somber tone? Why is it important that they hear the information about their future failure? How will the last part of the book address and redeem that?

4. Tuesday's lesson jumps to chapter 30:1-10 (which we looked at in the previous lesson) and talks about the importance of turning or returning to God. Why does Moses cover this in his last speech? What is the larger context of "return and obey" (ch. 30) within "listen and love" (ch. 6), "blessings and curses" (ch. 28; Genesis 3 & 12) framework?
5. Wednesday's lesson shows that the real issue was the hearts of Israelites and that the return to the Lord must be "with all your heart". How is that related to the promise that God will circumcise their hearts? What is our part, and what is God's part in this process?
6. Thursday's lesson moves to the New Testament and covers repentance in the preaching of John the Baptist, Jesus and Peter on the day of Pentecost.
7. Considering all that, what is the significance of the repentance concept in religion? Does God want us to crawl to him? Does he enjoy it when we say how bad we are? What is the purpose of repentance in the storyline (Romans 2:4)?
8. How do texts like Acts 5:31, 11:18, and 2 Timothy 2:25 help us understand that repentance is a gift from God and not something self-induced? Why doesn't God give repentance to everybody? What is the background for this "special" treatment? How is that related to forgiveness? Is forgiveness given to everybody (cf. story of Judas in Friday's lesson)? What is their mutual relationship? Which one precedes the other?
9. How would you explain the concept of repentance to a secular person? How does the significance of repentance depend on your picture of God? What is the difference between Old Testament and New Testament understanding of repentance? (In the NT there is a universal call for repentance for all.)
10. The book of Deuteronomy tells us that the grace which God freely gave to Israel in the past will one day be surpassed by his provision of a lasting solution to the problem of human sin. There is a prospect of divine intervention so radical and full of grace that it changes people at the very core of their being. Why is there joy and celebration in heaven over the repentance of just one sinner (Luke 15)? What does it imply for us? What is the source of joy for you (Isaiah 22:13)?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The most important of all Seventh-day Adventist beliefs is the one that brings joy and assurance to Christians everywhere, the truth about our Heavenly Father that was confirmed at such cost by the life and the death of His Son.

We believe that God is not the kind of person His enemies have made Him out to be—arbitrary, unforgiving and severe. We accept the testimony of Jesus when He said, "If you have seen me you have seen the Father." God is just as loving and trustworthy as His Son, just as willing to

forgive and heal. Though infinite in majesty and power, our Creator is an equally gracious Person who values nothing higher than the freedom, the dignity, and the individuality of His intelligent creatures, that their love, their faith, their willingness to listen and obey may be freely given.

This is the truth revealed through all the books of Scripture. This is the everlasting good news that wins the trust and admiration of God's loyal children throughout the universe. And like Abraham and Moses, the ones God spoke of as His trusted friends, we want to speak well and truly of our Heavenly Father. {"What We Believe" written by Graham Maxwell}

It was there in college that I began trying to read and understand the Bible as a whole. And it helped to have some knowledge of the languages in which it was first written. I soon came to realize that the Bible doesn't always describe sin as just breaking the rules.

In that much-used definition in 1 John 3:4, the Greek word for "transgression of the law" may also be literally translated "lawlessness." This would indicate that sin is first a rebellious attitude or frame of mind, a hostility to God and to his law, that in turn may lead one to commit this or that act of disobedience. The 1989 *New Revised Standard Version* translates, "Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness."

In the introduction to his letter to the believers in Rome, Paul states his conviction that he had been specially commissioned to bring about a new kind of obedience. It was to be different from the kind of obedience he himself had offered before he met Jesus on the Damascus road. It was to be what he calls literally "obedience of faith," "obedience of trust."

"Law-obedience" is what Paul used to practice with such zeal, and he was not at all pleased with the results. It had made him intolerant toward other people, even cruel. "Law-obedience" had actually led him to violate the whole spirit of God's law, the law of love.

By now urging "faith-obedience" or "trust-obedience," is Paul doing away with the law? "By no means!" Paul exclaims. "On the contrary, we uphold the law." (Romans 3:31, NRSV) Phillips interprets, "We put the Law in its proper place."

One proper place for the law has been to serve as "our attendant on the way to Christ." But the ultimate place is the one Jeremiah described. Paul agrees with the prophet. What the law requires may be written on the heart—the place, Paul explains to the Romans, where the conscience is active and people do their thinking. (See Romans 2:15)

"Trust-obedience" is the kind that results from "knowing" God, in the full meaning of that word. It comes from learning the truth about him and his use of law. It is the result of being won back to trust him as a Friend, to admire him for his wise and gracious ways.

This means that the Spirit of Truth has succeeded in writing the law “on our hearts.” Now we freely do what the law requires, not because we’ve been ordered to, but because we’re convinced in our own minds that what the law requires is right. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 102-104. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.} <http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter8.html>

“When you get back to the disciples, tell the disciples and especially tell Peter, that the Lord has arisen and will be back tonight.” Now this is the way the Lord treats people who’ve done terrible things. That was a terrible thing Peter did. And what a sin Mary committed over and over again. But they’re the ones who needed the most encouragement. They were sensitive people, people of strong feeling but doing wrong and terribly depressed over what they had done. They needed encouragement. The one who is our heavenly Father and doesn’t want to lose one of us, instead of condemning them, he sought to revive their self-respect. He treated them with dignity. Now if we imitate Christ as Paul did that’s the way we’ll treat other people. It seems to suggest that the worse a person’s predicament, the more we’ll go out of our way to help him recover his dignity and self-respect. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 14, recorded January 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/27MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/28MMROMANS66> Part 2)

Solomon came to his senses, and he remembered God. He said, “God, I’m sorry. Can I come back? And I’d be willing just to sweep floors.” Does God take people back that way? Or does he take them completely back? How about the prodigal son? Did he come back as a servant, or did he come back fully reinstated? So God took Solomon back. How fully did he take him back?

“Well,” Solomon said, “can I do anything to help others not do what I’ve done?” And God says, “Yes. You can write me a book.” And Solomon said, “But only holy men of God, moved by the Holy Spirit, write books in the Bible.”

Isn’t it stunning that a man who wasted so much is listed among the holy men of God and was asked to write yet another book in the Bible? Once again, I’m glad God is in charge, because when somebody disgraces himself in our church, from then on, he’s a back pew man, isn’t he? We don’t let him up front very much. God puts them up front, and even asks them to write more of the Bible. Now, what about that? Are we too hard?” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Joshua, Judges, & Ruth, recorded November 1983, 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/11MMPOGIA66> (Pt 1 Joshua & Judges)

<http://pkp.cc/12MMPOGIA66> (Pt 2 Joshua & Judges)

<http://pkp.cc/13MMPOGIA66> (Pt 1 Ruth & 1 Samuel)

<http://pkp.cc/14MMPOGIA66> (Pt 2 Ruth & 1 Samuel)

Do you know the word “obedience” in the Greek, and one can’t press the etymological meaning of the word too far, means literally “listening under, a humble willingness to listen.”

A doorkeeper is called by this word. Now what if you had a doorkeeper who said, “I’m listening, but I don’t intend to carry through with what I hear.” This isn’t just an idle, rude willingness to listen; it’s a *humble* willingness to listen. So when the doorkeeper listens, he hears his master knock, and he proceeds to open the door. Hence the word came to mean “obedience”, but the essence of the word is “a willingness to listen.”

Now does God expect of us perfect performance? He knows better. Can he expect of us perfect willingness to listen? What if we have a twenty-five percent reservation here? Then we’re not safe to save. I mean we’ve got a lot of listening to do in the hereafter. So God can demand obedience in this sense, a willingness to listen. And without it he can’t help us. And he says, “All the good things that have come to you have come by hearing; by a willingness to listen, in a mood of trust.” That’s all that is asked. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Galatians, #3, recorded February 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/3MMGALATIANS66>

### Further Study with Ellen White

As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded. There are no exceptions to this rule; for nothing that the divine hand has made has been forgotten by the divine mind. But while everything in nature is governed by natural law, man alone, as an intelligent being, capable of understanding its requirements, is amenable to moral law. To man alone, the crowning work of His creation, God has given a conscience to realize the sacred claims of the divine law, and a heart capable of loving it as holy, just, and good; and of man prompt and perfect obedience is required. Yet God does not compel him to obey; he is left a free moral agent. {1SM 216.2}

I saw that the angels of God are never to control the will. God sets before man life and death. He can have his choice. {EW 221.1}

The Lord will not compel men to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; He sets before the human agent good and evil, and makes plain what will be the sure result of following one course or the other. Christ invites us, saying, “Follow Me.” But we are never forced to walk in His footsteps. If we do walk in His footsteps, it is the result of deliberate choice. As we see the life and character of Christ, strong desire is awakened to be like Him in character; and we follow on to know the Lord, and to know His goings forth are prepared as the morning. We then begin to realize that “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”—R. & H., March 31, 1896. {CS 138.1}

God never compels the obedience of man. He leaves all free to choose whom they will serve. {PK 510.4}

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}

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}

God’s grace is ever working upon the human heart, and when it is received, the evidence of its reception will appear in the life and character of its recipient, for spiritual life will be seen developing from within. The grace of Christ in the heart will always promote spiritual life, and spiritual advancement will be made. {TMK 163.2}

The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all. There is no election but one’s own by which any may perish. God has set forth in His Word the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life—obedience to His commandments, through faith in Christ. God has elected a character in harmony with His law, and any one who shall reach the standard of His requirement, will have an entrance into the kingdom of glory. Christ Himself said, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” {SD 23.4}

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. {DA 568.3}

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}

God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make His purposes to fit circumstances, but He allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but He knew that such a condition would exist. The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven—this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages. And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity (ST March 25, 1897). {6BC 1082.3}

Christ came to change the current of his [man's] thoughts and affections.—1T 196 (1859). {2MCP 670.1}

God's healing power runs all through nature. If a tree is cut, if a human being is wounded or breaks a bone, nature begins at once to repair the injury. Even before the need exists, the healing agencies are in readiness; and as soon as a part is wounded, every energy is bent to the work of restoration. So it is in the spiritual realm. Before sin created the need, God had provided the remedy. Every soul that yields to temptation is wounded, bruised, by the adversary; but whenever there is sin, there is the Saviour. It is Christ's work "to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18. {Ed 113.1}

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}

All heaven has been looking on with interest, and ready to do whatever God might appoint, to help fallen men and women to become what God would have them. God will work for His children, but not without their cooperation. They must have indomitable energy, and a constant desire to become all that it is possible for them to be. {RC 296.3}

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. Through the merits of Christ man may be able to exercise the noblest powers of his being, and expel sin from his soul. . . . {TDG 124.2}

The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves—it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. With it come serenity and composure. It implants in the soul, joy that nothing earthly can destroy,—joy in the Holy Spirit,—health-giving, life-giving joy. {MH 115.3}

Our Saviour's words, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills. Though men have brought suffering upon themselves by their own wrongdoing, He regards them with pity. In Him they may find help. He will do great things for those who trust in Him. {MH 115.4}

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8. {SC 34.2}

The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house. The prodigal son in his wretchedness "came to himself." The deceptive power that Satan had exercised over him was broken. He saw that his suffering was the result of his own folly, and he said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father." Miserable as he was, the prodigal found hope in the conviction of his father's love. It was that love which was drawing him toward home. So it is the assurance of God's love that constrains the sinner to return to God. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Romans 2:4. A golden chain, the mercy and compassion of divine love, is passed around every imperiled soul. The Lord declares, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3. {COL 202.1}

Repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ are the fruits of the renewing power of the grace of the Spirit. Repentance represents the process by which the soul seeks to reflect the image of Christ to the world. {ML 49.3}

Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through cooperation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {ML 49.4}