

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2022: *In These Last Days: The Message of Hebrews*

Lesson 9 “Jesus, the Perfect Sacrifice”

Read for this week’s study

Hebrews 9:15; Genesis 15:6–21; Jeremiah 34:8–22; Ephesians 3:14–19; Hebrews 7:27; Hebrews 10:10; Hebrews 9:22–28.

Memory Text

“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Why Were Sacrifices Needed?
- III. Diverse Kinds of Sacrifices
- IV. Jesus’ Perfect Sacrifice
- V. The Cross and the Cost of Forgiveness
- VI. Judgment and the Character of God
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week we will look at the cross as it appears in the book of Hebrews.” (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. After the defeat of the ‘Spartacus’ uprising in 71 BC, six thousand slaves were crucified along the Appian Way (from Rome to Capua; 120 miles/200 kms). Why are they not considered the saviors? They suffered terribly and died a dreadful death on the cross! What makes Jesus the perfect Sacrifice? In what sense is his death different from theirs?
3. Why were the sacrifices needed? (Sunday’s lesson) How did the surrounding nations’ understanding of sacrifices differ from the way Israel understood sacrifices? How did pagan notions of sacrifice seep into the subconsciousness of the Israelites (and continues even beyond the Middle Ages)?
4. Why does Leviticus mention five diverse kinds of sacrifices? (Monday’s lesson) What is the significance of the fact that some of them were festive or devotional rather

than penitential in nature? How does that provide a more balanced view of atonement? Why, biblically speaking, must atonement be more than *expiation* (cancelation or dismissal of our guilt/punishment) or *propitiation* (appeasement)?

5. What is the significance of the fact that the Hebrew verb *kpr*, often translated as 'atone' or 'atonement' denotes 'to wipe away, wipe clean, purge' (see Leviticus 16:20, 33; Deuteronomy 32:43; Daniel 9:24; Isaiah 47:11).
6. In what sense was Jesus' sacrifice a perfect sacrifice? (Tuesday's lesson) What is the significance and implication that the author of Hebrews describes Jesus' sacrifice as "once for all"? In what sense does the death of Jesus become a symbol and an embodiment of his ability to wash away the damage that evil has caused in and around us, both individually, in a community, and universe-wide?
7. Hebrews 9:22-28 speaks about Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary. In what sense is this also a part of 'atonement'? (Wednesday's lesson)
8. The New Testament makes this powerful claim that Jesus' death was not the final end of the story. He rose from the dead and so he is the one who broke the power of death and evil. This means that he lives on to offer his life to anyone who will accept it.
9. The early Christians stopped participating in the ritual animal sacrifices. How do we participate in the power of Jesus' death and in his resurrected life? What is the New Testament way to remind us of God's love and encourage us to live a life of love and grace?
10. How do we connect to a new life source that can deal with the evil in our own lives and transform the community into the type of kingdom God longs to establish, not only on this planet, but in the whole universe?
11. In what sense does the redemption on the cross become a judgment of the character of God? How does it vindicate God's way of dealing with sin and sinners (Romans 3:21-26; 1:16,17; 5:8)? (Thursday's lesson)
12. Why is the universe-wide perspective on atonement so significant for a balanced understanding of it?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Unfortunately, some have come to regard the blood as if it had some magical power. Blood simply represents the death of Christ. Unless you understand the meaning of his death, the blood has no power. Otherwise we could be accused of hematolatriy (worship of the blood). So the power in the blood is only when we understand its meaning. This will keep the universe secure against apostasy for eternity. So even when we sing "There's power in the blood" we must say to ourselves, because we understand its meaning. There is no power in merely repeating or singing those words. But understanding the meaning of the death of Christ has

great power to change my life. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, “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>

Further Study with Ellen White

The law of God existed before man was created. It was adapted to the condition of holy beings; even angels were governed by it. After the Fall, the principles of righteousness were unchanged. Nothing was taken from the law; not one of its holy precepts could be improved. And as it has existed from the beginning, so will it continue to exist throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. “Concerning thy testimonies,” says the psalmist, “I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever” (Psalm 119:152). {1SM 220.2}

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. {MB 109.2}

What a God is our God! He rules over His kingdom with diligence and care, and He has built a hedge—the Ten Commandments—about His subjects to preserve them from the results of transgression. In requiring obedience to the laws of His kingdom, God gives His people health and happiness, peace and joy. {CT 454.1}

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}

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to

men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. {GC 465.1}

As a Teacher sent from God, Christ's work was to explain the true significance of the laws of God's government. His work was important; for He sought to present truth in contrast to the many false theories so destructive to the salvation of all who entertained them. He came, not to abrogate the law, but to be in His life a correct expositor of the character of God, which the law revealed. To remove the confusion of opinion existing everywhere concerning the meaning of the law, He Himself lived the law in its purity. {ST, May 7, 1902 par. 7}

Christ came as One able to expound the law of God, so long misunderstood and misinterpreted by priests and leaders. He tore away the gloomy framework of error and doubt, tradition and superstition, with which men had surrounded truth and obscured its brightness. Resetting the jewels of truth in the framework of God's law, He caused them to shine in their original, heavenly luster. He taught a religion entirely different from the religion taught by the Pharisees. He showed that true happiness springs from purity of heart. True religion is not a mere theory; it affects the heart, and is expressed in the life by good works. {ST, May 7, 1902 par. 8}

Heaven's law is always merciful, kind, tender, helpful, uplifting to others. {FLB 84.4}

He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth. {FLB 65.4}

His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. {FLB 65.5}

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}

The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died,—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, “and He will dwell with

them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift,—Immanuel, “God with us.” {DA 26.3}

He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. {ML 289.5}

God is to us a tender, compassionate, heavenly Father. {ML 289.6}

God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10. {FLB 129.2}

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. {FLB 129.3}

God in Christ is “reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. He is wooing by His tender love the hearts of His erring children. No earthly parent could be as patient with the faults and mistakes of his children, as is God with those He seeks to save. No one could plead more tenderly with the transgressor. No human lips ever poured out more tender entreaties to the wanderer than does He. All His promises, His warnings, are but the breathing of unutterable love. {SC 35.3}

“Come now, and let us reason together” is the Creator’s invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

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}

God accepts your broken, contrite heart. He offers you free pardon. He offers to adopt you into His family, with His grace to help your weakness, and the dear Jesus will lead you on step by step if you will only put your hand in His and let Him guide you.— Lt 38, 1887. {2MCP 451.3}

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}

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}

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9. God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10. And again he says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

To be pardoned in the way that Christ pardons is not only to be forgiven, but to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. The Lord says, “A new heart will I give unto thee.” The image of Christ is to be stamped upon the very mind, and heart, and soul. The apostle says, “And we have the mind of Christ.” {RC 303.4}

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

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}

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}

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 (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 7, p. 934). {LHU 372.6}

When we consider that Christ died for the ungodly while they were yet sinners, we are led to realize how willing and even anxious He is to bless us, that we may be a blessing to others (*Review and Herald*, Apr. 21, 1896). {LHU 353.5}

Not because we first loved Him did Christ love us; but "while we were yet sinners" He died for us. He does not treat us according to our desert. Although our sins have merited condemnation, He does not condemn us. Year after year He has borne with our weakness and ignorance, with our ingratitude and waywardness. Notwithstanding our wanderings, our hardness of heart, our neglect of His Holy Word, His hand is stretched out still. {MH 161.1}

Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice, . . . and they follow me" (John 10:27). The Shepherd of Israel does not drive His flock, but He leads them. His attitude is wholly one of invitation. {TMK 52.4}