

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2022: *In the Crucible With Christ*

Lesson 4 “Seeing *the Goldsmith’s Face*”

Read for this week’s study

Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 3:10; Job 23:1-10; Matthew 25:1-12; Daniel 12:1-10; Ephesians 4:11-16.

Memory Text

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. “In His Image”
- III. Faith Amid the Refining Fire
- IV. Jesus’ Last Words
- V. “The Wise”
- VI. Character and Community
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. “Theodicy” is the technical term given to the field of study concerned with God and human suffering. If God is both good and infinitely powerful, how can you explain all the suffering in this world? There are seven major theodicies or approaches to this question: These seven are titled the Perfect Plan, Free Will, Soul-making, Cosmic Conflict, Openness of God, Finite God and Protest theodicies. This particular lesson focuses on soul-making theodicy. This theodicy suggests that the best way to explain the existence of suffering in the context of a good and powerful God is that God uses suffering to teach us, to refine us, to make us better persons. Do you find that explanation helpful? What do you think are some of the strengths and weaknesses of such an explanation? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)

2. Read Romans 8:29. What role does the image of God play in the cosmic conflict? Read Hebrews 2:5-9. Why is the image of God so important to Him? (Sunday's Lesson)
3. Read Job 23:1-10. What is the essence of Job's struggle? What does he not see? At the same time, what does he take on faith, despite all the trials he experiences? In your experience, how do trials refine and purify us? Can you think of other ways we could be "refined" without having to go through suffering? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-12). What do you think the oil represents in this parable? If one reads the oil as the Holy Spirit or as the character of the waiting ones, how does the story read differently? How does the parable of the builders (Matthew 7:24-27) clarify the question? Read Matthew 25:31-46. On what basis does the king separate the sheep and the goats? What implications does this have for the meaning of the oil in the earlier parable? What is character? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Daniel 12:1-3, 10. What time in history is it referring to? What does this passage have to say about the character of God's people during these times? How are they distinguished from the wicked of this world? When it says that the wise will understand (Daniel 12:10), what is it that they will understand? What can we learn for today from the Bible's portrayal of the end-time situation? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Ephesians 4:11-16. What metaphor for the church does Paul use here? What role do the spiritual gifts play in the church? Why is this important at the end of time? In what way is the witness of a community more powerful than an individual? What are the implications of this for the cosmic conflict? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. Ellen White addressed the issue of this lesson as follows: "Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings; and never before was its diligent study so important as now. Never was any previous generation called to meet issues so momentous; never before were young men and young women confronted by perils so great as confront them today." Ed 225. Why is character building so important "now"? (Friday's Lesson)
8. If it is Christ's righteousness that saves us why do we need to develop character? (Friday's Lesson)
9. Helen Keller: "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved." Do you agree? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

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 of the reference sheet: "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, next on the list, 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 the 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. Then God stunned the universe by sharing with us, as far as he possibly could with mere created human beings, some of his own marvelous creative power. God so designed it that when a man and a woman come together in love, they are able to share life with little people; create little people in their own image.

Isn't it interesting to watch our children and our grandchildren? They look so much like us. They behave like us, at our best points and our worst points. Truly, they do reflect our image and God designed it to be this way. You recall God's words there in Genesis 1:28: "Have many children [I wonder what He would say to us now. Have many children], so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control." (GNB) That was his original plan. The Song of Solomon right in the middle of the Bible reminds us that this whole thing was God's idea. That we should be male and female and feel the way we do about each other, and say the things we do to each other, and come together in love, and create little people in our own image. {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>

The point is that we are being considered by our future neighbors and friends; and they're worried. Wouldn't you be, if you were an angel? They're going to let some of us in. They had a wall once before, and Satan capitalizes on this. Ellen White says he has an exact knowledge of every sin he's ever tempted us to commit. We sometimes think our sins are rather private, and when they're forgiven nobody knows them anymore. No, they know them. They're headlines throughout the universe. They're not forgotten. It wouldn't be fair to forget our sins and then put David's in the Bible. We preach about David's sins. Nobody's sins are hidden; they're all well known up there.

And the devil arises and says, "Let me show you that God once more has made a mistake. He says Jones is safe to save." And he lists all the things he's tempted us to do. And Ellen White has a tremendous speech in his mouth. "Look at all the sins that have marked their disloyalty to God. Look at their selfishness", et cetera, et cetera. How he dares make such a speech is almost unbelievable! And then he points to all the records and says, "Look at all the sins they have committed." If you had just heard your life described, and it was put to the vote, would you vote for yourself? I mean would you hang your head and wonder what's going to happen?

But then Christ arises, as she describes it, and he does not excuse our sins. He says, "The devil has told the truth. Jones did everything he's mentioned. In fact, due to the shortness of time, he left out a lot he could have mentioned." And there comes a murmur in the crowd and it's Jones' guardian angel, and he says, "Look, I was there, do you want me to fill in?" And the Lord says, "No, we've heard quite enough. Jones, on the record looks simply frightful. But let me tell you; that record is irrelevant, and it's out of date. It describes the kind of person Jones used to be. But Jones has a new heart and a right spirit within him. He was born as I told Nicodemus had to be, of the spirit. This doesn't describe Jones."

You see, God is not concerned about our sinful past, he's only concerned about the kind of people we are now. And if I were an angel, I wouldn't be concerned with whether or not God had forgiven Idi Amin; I'd want to know if it was safe to live next door to Idi Amin. When the prophet Isaiah meets King Manasseh in the hereafter, and he's innocently carrying a pruning hook or something to prune his vines; the last time he held one in his hands he was sawing poor Isaiah in half in a hollow log. And will God say, "Well, don't worry about him carrying that saw, I forgave him"? That wouldn't reassure me at all; I'd want to know if he could be trusted with a sharp saw. And that's why Jesus said to Nicodemus "Not unless ye be forgiven." No, he said "Not unless you be born again." It's a healing ministry; new hearts, right spirits. David finally got the message and said, "Sacrifices won't do it, I need a new heart, I need a right spirit, I need truth in the inner man." Now he didn't say, "I'll stop offering sacrifices" because Christ hadn't yet come. But he says, "I'm going to start offering them for a different reason now." As Hebrews says, all the sacrifices were a constant reminder of sin, and that sin leads to death. He

says, "I'll go on doing that." But no more were they sacrifices "to propitiate the wrath of God", and things like that.

Well I see this discussion going on in heaven. What chance do we have? Has God proved his ability to judge the human heart? Job showed that. And many other places. The last generation may show that. No angel can read our hearts; no angel can read our thoughts. If they could, they could have read Lucifer's thoughts and known, they would have known he was a deceiver. They couldn't read what his plan was. Only God can read our innermost thoughts. And so they have to look to God to say, "Is Jones really changed; is he safe to save?" And when Jesus says, "Yes he is", then they say, "Then we'll welcome him at the gates." And so, I think they have very legitimate questions. I mean, they should be afraid that we're coming in. They have to hear Jesus say, "Don't judge the man by the record. Let me tell you, he's not that kind of person anymore; he's been changed." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Atonement and Your Picture of God, recorded May 1993, San Diego, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

[http://pkp.cc/1MMAANDP \(Part 1\)](http://pkp.cc/1MMAANDP) [http://pkp.cc/2MMAANDP \(Part 2\)](http://pkp.cc/2MMAANDP)

Look, for example, in the first two chapters of Job. And if you wonder how many attend, look in the book of Daniel where it says a hundred million beings watch as the court meets. Now note how God resolves questions, particularly of the charges of Satan that are leveled against him and against his friends before the heavenly court. In the book of Job, Satan accused God, and he accused Job of being unworthy of God's trust. Did God say, "That's a lie Satan; this man is perfect!" God said, "You've raised a serious question. The only way to answer it is to show you."

And look at the rest of the book of Job. Did Job show himself to be a trustworthy friend of God? Did he trust God because he was being richly rewarded or did he seem to be utterly abandoned and yet he still trusted God? And the book ends with God saying, "Thank you, Job, you've said of me what is right." Job was God's friend all the way through and God could then turn to the heavenly court and say, "Do you need any more evidence about the falsity of Satan's charges and the trustworthiness of my friend Job?"

This is God's way. God himself has been accused. He does not merely deny the accusation. He says: "Let me show you. My children, let me show you the falsity of these accusations and the truth about myself, and you decide." Imagine the humility of the Infinite One submitting his character and government to the scrutiny and investigation of his mere creatures. But that's God's way, and it is the only way to really establish love and trust in the fullest sense of freedom. {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>

Lou: But you referred to Job. If I remember correctly, God called Job a perfect person. He referred to him as perfect. And yet as you come to the end of the book of Job, it says he repented.

Graham: In dust and ashes.

Lou: Yes. Now, what did he have to repent of? What does repentance mean when God has said, "Here is a perfect man"? He says that to Lucifer, to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? A good and perfect man."

Graham: That's right. In the hearing of the on-looking universe; "Here is a perfect man." And the perfect man says, "I repent." Well, I notice that we are more inclined to point out his repentance rather than God's word that he is perfect. We need to re-read the whole book here this evening. But my understanding is that under the pressure of the bad advice of his friends, Job finally came to the place where he said, "God, I'm sorry I have talked about things beyond my understanding." And God immediately intervened and said, "Don't give up, Job. You have done splendidly! You have said of me what is right. Don't let these three theologians discourage you. In fact, pray for them. They need a lot of help to know me the way you do" (Job 42:7, 8).

So we really need to take that book as a whole. God said he was perfect. Job in his humility said, "God, I have said a lot, and I've said it with a great deal of feeling. If I seem the least bit irreverent, I repent." God said, "A man who is covered with boils and has lost his whole family; oh, I can understand why you cry the way you have. You did not insult me by this. You honored me with your confidence." Which, by the way, comes up next week when we have "Talking to God as a Friend." Job is a marvelous example of how freely we can talk to God, yet still be reverent. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #14 with Lou Venden, "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>

Think how Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. "Father," he said, "remove this cup from me." He was honest in what he prayed. He knew he had come to drink the cup. He knew that was the whole purpose—the culmination of his life here. And yet, in honesty to his Father he expressed his feelings. He said, "I shrink from this. Remove this cup from me." But he didn't stop there. He said, "Nevertheless, they will be done."

Do you know we pray exactly the same prayer in the Lord's Prayer, except we put thy will be done first, and a little later we say lead us not into temptation. And the Greek word is, lead us not into testing, into trial. Is it proper to relish trial? It isn't emotionally healthy to say, "Bring on the trials, Lord." In fact, it could be arrogant and a misplaced self confidence. Jesus never said, "I'm ready. Bring it on." No, he expressed his honest feelings, "God remove the cup from me. I

shrink from the horror of what I know is coming. Nevertheless God, thy will be done.” And I love to think in the Lord’s Prayer, which you know we repeat so often we can come to the ‘amen’ and not recall having said a word before it. It’s a pity to repeat it to that point. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, PUC Teacher’s Conference, #9 “Praying to God as a Friend”, recorded April 1974, Angwin, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/9MMPUCTEACH>*

Further Study with Ellen White

To human beings, striving for conformity to the divine image, there is imparted an outlay of heaven’s treasure, an excellency of power that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen. {HP 148.5}

Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. {FLB 142.2}

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. “I, if I be lifted up from the earth,” He said, “will draw all unto Me.” {DA 626.1}

The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415.5}

Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Emmanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives. {COL 419.3}

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, *Let your light shine*. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord’s glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence. {COL 420.1}

The angels of heaven are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. We know not now who they are; it is not yet made manifest who shall overcome, and share the inheritance of the saints in light; but angels of heaven are passing throughout the length and breadth of the earth, seeking to comfort the sorrowing, to protect the imperiled, to win the

hearts of men to Christ. Not one is neglected or passed by. God is no respecter of persons, and He has an equal care for all the souls He has created. {DA 639.1}

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, “Love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. {DA 641.3}

In the time of trouble, just previous to the coming of Christ, the lives of the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of holy angels. {3SG 196.1}

Soon I saw the saints suffering great mental anguish. They seemed to be surrounded by the wicked inhabitants of the earth. Every appearance was against them. Some began to fear that God had at last left them to perish by the hand of the wicked. But if their eyes could have been opened, they would have seen themselves surrounded by angels of God. Next came the multitude of the angry wicked, and next a mass of evil angels, hurrying on the wicked to slay the saints. But before they could approach God’s people, the wicked must first pass this company of mighty, holy angels. This was impossible. The angels of God were causing them to recede and also causing the evil angels who were pressing around them to fall back. {EW 283.1}

Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that our bread and water will be sure at that time, and that we shall not lack or suffer hunger; for God is able to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites. {EW 56.2}

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}

But in the midst of the time of trouble that is coming—a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—God’s chosen people will stand unmoved. Satan and his angels cannot destroy them, for angels that excel in strength will protect them.—Letter 119, 1904. {2SM 55.2}

The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. . . . Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life. {GC 634.1}

Precious treasure will be secured by those who study God's Word with earnestness, for heavenly angels will direct the search.—*Undated Manuscript 111*. {Ev 214.4}

The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to cooperate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them. . . . Glorious is the hope before the believer as he advances by faith toward the heights of Christian perfection! {ML 101.3}

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. {SC 68.1}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {TMK 366.4}