

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Third Quarter 2022: *In the Crucible With Christ*

#### Lesson 7 “Indestructible Hope”

#### Read for this week’s study

Habakkuk 1:1-4; Job 38-41; Isaiah 41:8-14; Jeremiah 29:1-10; Hebrews 12:1-13.

#### Memory Text

“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Romans 5:5, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. The Big Picture
- III. Who Our Father Is
- IV. Our Father’s Presence
- V. Our Father’s Plans for us
- VI. Our Father’s Discipline
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. Theologians and philosophers throughout the centuries came up with seven basic models of theodicy (see Lesson #4). This lesson concentrates on the Cosmic Conflict model. This goes beyond the most popular “free will defense” articulating a theodicy and is rooted in the nature of God’s love within a framework of a cosmic conflict. “How does our understanding of the character of God help us maintain hope in the crucible?” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson deals with God’s invitation to Habakkuk (1:1-4, 13) to see the bigger picture. What is God’s response to Habakkuk’s complaint about the Assyrians? It is going to get worse, but God will use the Babylonians to punish the Assyrians for their abuse of power and make the Babylonians accountable too (2:2-3 cf. Hebrews 10:37).
3. Monday’s lesson discusses the questions that God asks Job in chs. 38-41. What is the purpose of these 60+ jaw-dropping questions? Is God saying, “Job, I am a lot smarter than you, so just stop asking questions!?” If we look carefully at what God says,

God's questions are indicating something very important about the kind of person he is—the kind of person who creates in such a way that the morning stars sing together and the angels shout for joy. Job discovers who God is—the kind of person God is, and that is enough for him. "I can trust you with my children. I know that they are better off in your hands than ever they were in mine. I can trust you with my pain. I know that you will redeem every bit of it—that you're the kind of God who treasures and cares for everything."

4. Tuesday's lesson addresses God's presence with the people of Israel, though they are in exile. God acted in righteousness when he sent them to exile, he will act in righteousness when he delivers them from exile. Why are 41:13-14 some of the most powerful words describing God's caring love? How do we understand God's "presence"? Why do we pray for God to "be" with us and our loved ones? What does it say about our understanding of God?
5. Wednesday's lesson looks at Jeremiah 29:1-11. Where do most people find their hope (cf. Psalm 137:1-2)? How can the situation of exile still be a source of hope for Israel (vs. 4.7, 10)? What can they learn in Babylon that they would never learn in Jerusalem? Why does God want them to have a transforming influence on Babylon?
6. Thursday's lesson explores Hebrews 12:5-13: "Reading chapter 12 is like being given a set of reading glasses. Without these glasses our vision or understanding of hardship will always be fuzzy. But looking through these glasses will correct the blurred explanation of suffering that our culture presses upon us. Then we will be able to understand clearly and be able to respond to trials intelligently."
7. What was the context of the original readers or listeners of this letter/sermon? Was the idea of suffering as being God's discipline for them of some comfort or concern? In what ways does God treat us as we would expect from a loving parent? How were these words (and those of Proverbs) abused throughout the centuries? In this universe even God does not always get what he wants. Does knowing this reality help us not blame God for what may be happening in our lives? What are the consequences of thinking "God is doing this to me?"
8. How can we cling to the truth of Hebrews 12:11 when things are difficult? How does knowing that we are in the care of a loving father, rather than a distant, faceless and careless bureaucrat help us when we are facing a difficult situation? Why did Hebrews make such a forceful point that the Man of Sorrows identified with us and also had his share of pain (5:7-10)?
9. What do you see as advantages of this model of theodicy? However, even this perspective does not assuage our suffering or explain it away, and it does not intend to do so. It makes no attempt to explain every specific instance of evil. Also, it explicitly denies that every instance of evil is necessary for some greater good. It maintains that one day God, who gave himself for this world in order to defeat evil, will eradicate evil utterly and forever. "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" (Revelation 5:13)

## Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

We would do well to remember that many of God's friends in Old Testament times wondered what God's purposes might be. We've probably mentioned Habakkuk already, who said, "God, why don't you do something about what's happening? Why do you make me look on so much violence?" And God replies, "I am doing something. But you wouldn't believe it if I told you." And Habakkuk said, "Well, I decided that I would watch." And God said in reply, "Well it might take a little time, but if you're my friend, you'll be willing to wait." That is, righteous people are willing to live in trust.

That's the source of Luther's famous quotation. Of course, he got it from Romans, but Romans got it from Habakkuk; "The just shall live by faith." which we are inclined to understand as having something to do perhaps, with the forgiveness of sin. No, the setting is, if you trust God, you'll be willing to wait. You'll trust him enough to be willing to let him do his thing in his own time, and let him work out his plan. That is the real meaning of that verse. I also think that's the meaning in Romans, that righteous people live in trust in God, and are willing to let him do things his way and in his own good time. Habakkuk said, "Alright, I'm willing to wait because I trust you, God." {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)

God is looking for grownups in these last days. For is it not possible that during the time of trouble we will lose many things as Job did? We may even lose our health. And yet, covered with boils, with no evidence whatever, according to the theology of the day that God approved him, Job remained God's friend. God could hardly wait at the end to interrupt and say, "Job, you've done magnificently; you've said of me what is right." And in these last days, very difficult ones, not a time for children but for grownups like Job, we must come to the place where we don't look for these reassurances that a child has to have all the time. No wet fleeces and dry ones. Maybe apparently deserted like Job, and yet remain loyal to the very end.

I think that's why God waits. We were discussing what he's waiting for. He's waiting for a group of people so settled into this truth about him, based on all this evidence that we are going through, that even when Satan comes as Christ they will not be deceived. They really know

what God is like and would stake their lives on it. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Deuteronomy, recorded November 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

\*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/9MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/10MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

I think one of the most important things to do when reading Job is to be sure you read the conclusion before making up your mind about the whole purpose of the book. When Job says, “I repent”, in the last chapter, many people are nodding their heads and saying, “Indeed, he should. Look at all the bold things he said to God.” But read a little further, and God says to the theologians, “You have not said of me what is right, as my servant Job has done.” So let us not condemn what God compliments.

But this raises the interesting question, how could it be said that Job had said of God what is right? You remember all the things he said, and the way he says them. And then, where were the three theologians wrong? Many of the positions they take might sound rather familiar. And it almost is a surprise at the end, if you can imagine reading it for the first time again, to note the conclusion. God compliments Job.

Certainly one sees the Great Controversy in this book. At the very beginning, the assembling of the family of God, and the discussion about Job. Notice who’s defending, and who’s accusing, as usual. And if Moses wrote Job, and Ellen White accepts that without discussion, this may have been one of the first books written in the Bible. Meaning that not only does the Bible begin with the Great Controversy in Genesis, but also in Job. It doesn’t matter that we establish that, but some see no great controversy running through scripture like this. I think Job is one of the places that paints the picture. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from audio series, “Picture of God In All 66”, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, recorded December 1981, Riverside CA}

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Ezra and Nehemiah, recorded November 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

\*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/23MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/24MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

This time, we know the truth about death, and we're ready to see God, for the first time in the history of the universe, leave Satan and his followers to reap the natural results of their sin. And they will die. But we've seen death. We understand about death. And we will not misunderstand the death of the wicked in the end, and we will not serve God from fear for eternity. And that's why I believe everyone has to understand this before the wicked die in the end.

Think of it meaning so much to God that he would even resurrect the wicked! Who would suffer more than God, seeing all his children resurrected—the wicked ones? Why would he do this? The price must be worth it. It must be apparent to the whole family that God is not the one who takes anyone of his children's eternal life away. He does not do that. He never said, "Obey me, or I'll kill you." We do not live with that kind of a God.

Oh, "if you disobey me, I'll discipline you." There's a lot of that in scripture. But do you discipline your children because you hate them? Do you discipline them to the point of destruction? Does it do any good to kill your son and say, "I hope that's taught you a lesson"? It wouldn't do any good. That's not discipline. "Whom the Lord loves, he disciplines."

The death in the end is no discipline. It is the inevitable and awful consequence of God leaving his children to reap the natural results of their own rebellious choice. And if we have any doubts about it at that time, we now can watch the wicked die, as the angels watched Jesus die. We didn't watch that. We read about it. The universe watched and got the message. In the end we will watch the wicked die, and we can look in the face of Jesus, still in his human form. And how do you think he will look? He will be crying. Hosea 11, and all these other places. And if we don't feel the same way, a mistake was made in letting us in. We'll all feel that way. "How can we give you up? How can we let you go?" But we know it leads to death. We cannot live alone in this universe. We are dependent upon God. Is that offensive? Lucifer found it offensive to be a creature. And yet when you think of it, God is willing to treat us like gods, when we're only creatures. Every Sabbath we're reminded of that. Does it annoy you to be a creature, and not a god? Well, you're like Satan, if it does. I hope you really don't feel that way! God wishes to treat us as his sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters of the Lord. He doesn't rub in our creatureliness. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God* in all 66 – Romans, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/61MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/62MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: This question is asked, "Could the word 'wrath' have been translated differently, as in the three angels' messages? Could there have been a better word than 'wrath' used?"

Graham: Hmm. That's an interesting question. That's a limitation of human language. The word is *orge* which just **did** mean wrath, even fury. God is limited to our human language with all the hazards thereunto appertaining. And so we have to take the whole context to understand. The question there that appeals to me most is: "Why would God use the word at all, if He does not wish to be understood as angry?" It would seem to me that He has left the impression that He is angry with us, and I would have to compare that with a father's conversation with his little girl. Say, you've tried everything else under the sun to persuade her not to help herself to cookies at three in the afternoon and it hasn't worked. But finally you put this little youngster in front of you, and you know how it is with the little daughters; we both have them, and how cute and innocent they can look, even in the midst of iniquity. And you say, "Look, if you do that one more time, Daddy's going to be **very, very** cross with you."

Now, don't smile when you say that, because she doesn't know what "cross" means. She can't look it up in *Webster's*. She knows what "cross" means by the look on your face and the tone of your voice. So you feel like a bully. Here's this little, tiny child with pigtails, and you're saying, "Daddy will be very, very cross with you."

And a little later, you thought you had impressed her adequately; you find her tiptoeing around the corner and reaching up and taking another cookie. And it's so cute, you wish you had your camera. And then you suddenly realize, no, this is the time for some stern discipline. And you put this helpless little girl in front of you. She puts her hands behind her and assumes that posture that little girls can, and you as a big brute say, "Daddy told you that if you did that one more time, he'd be very, very cross." You have to look cross, sound cross. Don't glance over to your wife, you know, or you'll melt. You've got to go through with this thing.

I think it's a matter of communication. And God has dealt with children. We've been the immature children.

He even has to say, "Do that one more time and I will be furious with you!" So I think our human experience helps us to understand the scripture. Parents and teachers and little ones are in the best position to read the Bible sympathetically, it seems to me.

Lou: You remind me of a friend of mine who asked his little girl as he took off his belt, "You know what's going to happen now?" And she chuckled and said, "Your trousers are going to fall down." He had a terrible time. He had to leave the room because he was trying to do what you have suggested. He was trying to make the message stick.

Graham: Discipline, as well. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #9 with Lou Venden, "There Is No Need To Be Afraid of God" 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/9MMCAG>*

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

Opposition to the law of God had its beginning in the courts of heaven, with Lucifer, the covering cherub. Satan determined to be first in the councils of heaven, and equal with God. He began his work of rebellion with the angels under his command, seeking to diffuse among them the spirit of discontent. And he worked in so deceptive a way that many of the angels were won to his allegiance before his purposes were fully known. Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character, nor see to what his work was leading. When Satan had succeeded in winning many angels to his side, he took his cause to God, representing that it was the desire of the angels that he occupy the position that Christ held. {7BC 972.6}

The evil continued to work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. Then there was war in heaven, and Satan, with all who sympathized with him, was cast out. Satan had warred for the mastery in heaven, and had lost the battle. God could no longer trust him with honor and supremacy, and these, with the part he had taken in the government of heaven, were taken from him. {7BC 973.1}

Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it, is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. {FLB 66.3}

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages, a perpetual testimony to the nature and terrible results of sin. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government and His law is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy intelligences, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin and suffering its punishments. {GC 499.1}

The underworking [of Satan] was so subtle that it could not be made to appear before the heavenly host as the thing that it really was . . . . This condition of things had existed a long period of time before Satan was unmasked.—4BC 1143. {TA 40.1}

The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants. To him that “walketh righteously” is the promise: “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.” Isaiah 33:15, 16; 41:17. {GC 629.2}

In Christ the character of the Father was revealed. As children looked upon His countenance, they saw purity and goodness shining forth from His eyes. In His countenance gentleness, meekness, love, and conscious power were combined. But though every word, every gesture, every expression of His face, betokened His divine supremacy, humility marked His deportment and bearing. He came but for one purpose, and that was the salvation of the lost. {ML 300.4}

The precious Saviour will send help just when we need it. The way to heaven is consecrated by His footprints. Every thorn that wounds our feet has wounded His. Every cross that we are called to bear He has borne before us. The Lord permits conflicts, to prepare the soul for peace. The time of trouble is a fearful ordeal for God’s people; but it is the time for every true believer to look up, and by faith he may see the bow of promise encircling him. {GC 633.1}

Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. {FLB 62.8}

As the wheellike complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of this earth. {PK 536.1}

He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His work. He will thwart the purposes of wicked men and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amidst the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands. {PK 176.1}

The Lord does not leave His wounded and bruised sheep to the power of Satan to be torn in pieces. He is ever strengthening His own when they are weak. He delivers the tried and tempted ones from the enemy’s power. The Lord Jesus never forsakes any soul that puts his trust in Him. {UL 150.4}



Often your mind may be clouded because of pain. Then do not try to think. You know that Jesus loves you. He understands your weakness. You may do His will by simply resting in His arms. {MH 251.3}

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character are revealed. By the marvelous display of His love in giving “His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” the character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. Through Christ our heavenly Father is made known as the God of love. {ST, December 15, 1914 par. 5}

Could your eyes be opened, you would see your heavenly Father bending over you in love and could you hear His voice, it would be in tones of compassion to you who are prostrate with suffering and affliction. Stand fast in His strength; there is rest for you, the weary.—Letter 71, Dec. 5, 1878, to J. N. Andrews. {TDG 348.4}

Christ is your Advocate. In this powerful, hearty recognition of God’s love, take the hand of Christ, and hold it fast. His hand holds you much firmer than you can hold His hand. {SD 22.6}

Through varied channels the heavenly messengers are in active communication with every part of the world, and when man calls upon the Lord with a true and earnest heart, God is represented as bending from His throne above. He listens to every yearning cry, and answers, “Here am I.” He raises up the distressed and oppressed. He bestows His blessings on the evil as well as on the good. {TMK 98.3}

Infinite love—how great it is! God made the world to enlarge heaven. He desires a larger family of created intelligences (MS 78, 1901). {1BC 1081.2}

All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. {6T 63.3}

In the light of the Saviour’s life, the hearts of all, even from the Creator to the prince of darkness, are revealed. Satan has represented God as selfish and oppressive, as claiming all, and giving nothing, as requiring the service of His creatures for His own glory, and making no sacrifice for their good. But the gift of Christ reveals the Father’s heart. It testifies that the thoughts of God toward us are “thoughts of peace, and not of evil.” Jeremiah 29:11. It declares that while God’s hatred of sin is as strong as death, His love for the sinner is stronger than death. Having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. No truth essential to our salvation is withheld, no miracle of mercy is neglected, no divine agency is left unemployed. Favor is heaped upon favor, gift upon gift. The whole treasury of heaven is open to those He seeks to save. Having collected the riches of the universe, and laid open the resources of infinite power, He gives them all into

the hands of Christ, and says, All these are for man. Use these gifts to convince him that there is no love greater than Mine in earth or heaven. His greatest happiness will be found in loving Me. {DA 57.1}

Constantly the heavenly agencies are communicating with men and women on the earth. We cannot see personally the angels of God round about us; nevertheless they are with us, guiding and directing. We are to be so fully under the influence of the Spirit of God that we shall be susceptible to His leadings. {HP 322.4}

Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet. {MH 481.2}

The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing is too small for His attention. {8T 260.1}

The Lord's care is over all His creatures. He loves them all and makes no difference, except that He has the most tender pity for those who are called to bear life's heaviest burdens. {FLB 63.2}

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. Not one that in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. The Saviour is by the side of His tempted and tried ones. With Him there can be no such thing as failure, loss, impossibility, or defeat; we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. When temptations and trials come, do not wait to adjust all the difficulties, but look to Jesus, your helper. {DA 490.5}

The path where God leads the way may lie through the desert or the sea, but it is a safe path. {PP 290.3}

But though the conflict is a ceaseless one, none are left to struggle alone. Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him. As His children draw near to Him for protection from evil, in pity and love He lifts up for them a standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands. {PK 570.4}

God has angels whose whole work is to draw those who shall be heirs of salvation. Whenever one takes a step toward Jesus, Jesus is taking steps toward him. The angels' work is to keep back the powers of Satan (MS 17, 1893). {7BC 922.5}

All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against man. He does not make man spiritually blind. God

gives sufficient light and evidence to enable man to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force man to receive truth. He leaves him free to choose the good or to choose the evil. {6BC 1112.5}

When the love of Christ is enshrined in the heart, like sweet fragrance it cannot be hidden. Its holy influence will be felt by all with whom we come in contact. The spirit of Christ in the heart is like a spring in the desert, flowing to refresh all and making those who are ready to perish, eager to drink of the water of life. {SC 77.3}