

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2022: *In the Crucible With Christ*

Lesson 8 “Seeing the Invisible”

Read for this week’s study

Romans 8:28-39; John 14:1-14; Ephesians 1:18-23; Isaiah 40:27-31.

Memory Text

“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Our Father’s Extravagance
- III. In the Name of Jesus
- IV. The Power of the Resurrection
- V. To Carry All Our Worry
- VI. Still Faithful When God Cannot Be Seen
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. The Study Guide describes the purpose of the lesson as: “We are called to see ‘him who is invisible’ not simply when times are good, but especially when everything is going wrong. For this we need a Christlike faith that must be shaped by the truth about God and God’s kingdom. The truth about our Father’s goodness, the power in the name of Jesus, the power of the Resurrection, and the compassion of God are essential truths that will enable us to stand strong when we are in the crucible and may be tempted to doubt everything.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What makes Moses a ‘hero of faith’ according to Hebrews 11:23-31? Moses, just like Abraham, acted on faith in God that looks to the future and knows that God has planned something better than anything we could see or accomplish for ourselves. Why was this meaningful to the first readers of the letter? How can this message be meaningful to us in our time and place? Looking at our lives and our future in these difficult times, how do we keep our eyes on the bigger picture and engage the process of faith, placid trust in God?

3. In what way does Romans 8:28-39 powerfully describe the goodness of God toward us? What is the difference between the traditional reading, “all things work together for good” (KJV, NKJV, ESV) and the one based on Greek (and better manuscripts), “God in all things works together for good with those...” (NASB)? Why is the text Romans 8:32 crucial in this context? (Sunday’s lesson)
4. John 14:13-14 is likely one of the most frequently misquoted texts in history and has often been made into an ending to our prayers: “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” (Monday’s lesson) What is the meaning of this in the context of John’s chapter 14? How does understanding the life of Jesus (Hebrews 5:7-8), James (Acts 12:1-2) and Paul (2 Timothy 4:6-8) help us to better understand this text?
5. Tuesday’s lesson discusses the power of God and the power of the resurrection. What is the meaning of Ephesians 1:18-23? What was so exceptional about raising Jesus from the dead (v. 20)? How would you respond when someone says: “I do not see the power of Jesus doing very much in the world today”? How can we appreciate that God as a Creator is working towards restoring the world, including human beings, to their original condition? How does that address the escapism that is so prevalent in classical Christianity?
6. Different people experience different levels of worry or anxiety. What is the significance of “Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares about you.”? (1 Peter 5:7; Wednesday’s lesson). Why do you think Peter encourages Christians to transfer everything that is weighing them down onto God’s back? Why is it important that this is a quotation from Psalm 55:22? How is this one of the ways Christians can humble themselves? (1 Peter 5:6)
7. Thursday’s lesson turns our attention to Isaiah 40:27-31. It didn’t appear to the Judeans exiled in Babylon that God cared very much about their situation. How are these verses (and the whole chapter) trying to convince them to look at their situation from a different perspective?
8. How can we ensure that we distinguish between facts and interpretations? And how can we guard against temptations to assume that our present interpretations, which may be narrow, equal the larger reality? What role do our emotions and reasoning powers play in this?
9. Most of us have seen people, even fellow Christians, in situations in which the worst thing they feared and imagined actually happened, despite their prayers and best efforts. How can we make sure that religion is not used as a way of escaping reality? How can we still believe that God knows what is going on and that He will ultimately resolve it in an even better way than we could have imagined?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And as Christians, we talk about it a great deal. But, what is this faith? What do we mean when we say to a person, "Have faith," or, "You should have more faith," or, "We're saved by faith," or, "righteousness by faith." Faith means so many different things these days that we almost need another word. A boxer will succeed in beating his opponent into a state of insensibility, and when asked by the reporters to what he attributes his surprising success, he will say, "My faith." The most notorious definition (I'm sure you may have heard) is the one given by a small schoolboy. He said, "Faith is believin' what you know ain't so." You see, if you're prepared to believe what "you know ain't so," that's *real* faith.

Now, most of us wouldn't go that far. But might we say, "Faith is believing something for which you have insufficient evidence," because if you had sufficient evidence, you wouldn't say, "I accept that by faith," you would say, "I know." Does that mean that the more we come to know God, the less faith we'll have? And someday, when we stand in His presence will we say, "God, I see you now, and that's the end of my faith. I'll never trust you again, because now I know you"?

Or does the famous verse in Hebrews 11:1 help us? What verse has been more memorized than this? First the familiar wording of the *King James*: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (KJV) Does it help to know that faith is a substance? Or that faith is the evidence of things not seen? That would suggest that if you have faith in something, that's evidence that it really is so. If you have faith that there's a man in the moon does that prove there must be one? That doesn't make sense! But do we sometimes use faith this way? Does Hebrews 11 encourage us to do so? Let's look at those two words, translated "substance" and "evidence."

Take evidence first: the Greek word is *elegchos*. It's a noun that comes from a verb that's used for the work of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit comes, He will convince you. He will convict you. He will settle you into the truth. A better translation would be "conviction." Faith is conviction.

Then the other word, "substance." Well, this is a word we don't often use in English. Hypostasis comes from the Greek *hupostasis*. That doesn't help much to know that faith is a *hupostasis*, does it? But does it help to know that faith is a substance? The Greek word *hupostasis*, means "that which stands under," and that's where "sub" "stance" came from. Which is very good Latin but not very good English.

Not until the turn of the century did scholars really discover what this word means. As archeologists were digging in the sands of Egypt, looking for manuscripts primarily, they even found crocodiles sometimes, stuffed with manuscripts. Among these manuscripts they found that some were title deeds to property, business agreements, covenants; and the title on each of these documents was this very word, *hupostasis*. And it dawned on some of them that what

the apostle was saying here is that faith is, as it were, an agreement, a covenant. God has much to offer us, but first He presents Himself. Do we find Him worthy of our trust? If we do, He has much we could accomplish together. And if we decide we can trust Him, and that we would like to do business with Him, (to speak of this in business terms) then that trusting relationship is faith.

So how should we translate it? Let's look at three different translations: "Now faith is **the title-deed** of things hoped for." (*Montgomery*). That's where it came from. It is the word for a title-deed. And the one who translated that is Mrs. Montgomery, one of the few women who has translated the Bible, in 1924. "Now faith means that we are **confident** of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see" (*Moffatt*). Or, "Now faith is **being sure of** what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (NIV) [emphases supplied]. Can you see the idea coming through of conviction, certainty? That's the meaning of faith. Now it helps very much to look at the context of Hebrews 11:1, such as the verses right before it, and remember there were no chapter divisions in the early days. Look at Hebrews 10:32-39:

Don't throw away your trust now—it carries with it a rich reward. Patient endurance is what you need if, after doing God's will, you are to receive what he has promised. For yet a little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry. But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him. Surely we are not going to be men who cower back and are lost, but men who maintain their faith for the salvation of their souls!
(*Phillips*)

Faith is our conviction. It's being certain about things that at the moment we cannot see. And if you know the background of that verse in Hebrews, you know that this goes back to Habakkuk; chapters one and two where Habakkuk says to God, "Why aren't you going to do something?" And God says, "I am. But you wouldn't believe it if I told you." And Habakkuk says, "I do. I'm going to wait and see." And God says, "If what I have predicted seems slow, wait for it; it will come. My righteous one will live in trust." That famous verse, "The just shall live by faith", is not discussing forgiveness or justification. The background for that verse is the one who is right with me—and my friend, will trust me and be willing to wait. And that's the kind of trust and right relationship with God that really counts. And when we come to Romans, (to look at that verse a little later) that's the background for it.

The angels had such trust, at least the loyal ones did. They also had questions! But they said to God, "We trust you enough that we're willing to wait," and they waited all the way to Calvary for some of the answers to their questions. They heard the promise to Adam and Eve that God was going to do something, and they were willing to wait because they trusted God. It certainly helps to understand "salvation by faith" and "righteousness by faith," to understand faith as trust in this way. We're not saved by faith; that is, faith does not save us. God saves us. But God can only save those who trust Him.

Like a physician, God stands ready to heal all the damage done. But He will not force us to be well. If we don't trust Him enough to listen, and to cooperate, and let Him heal the damage done, there's no way He can heal us. Physicians cannot heal rebellious patients who stay away because they think the doctor is a quack. Only when there is mutual trust can healing really take place. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3, "All God Asks Is Trust" recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/3MMCAG>*

Lou: What about praying in the name of Jesus? What is the meaning or significance of that, the importance of that?

Graham: I think it is significant that Jesus said, "Pray to the Father in my name, and the Spirit will help you do it." I think that's for historical reasons, you see. The Son is the one who came to reveal the truth about the Father. The Spirit gives us the record and brings the confirmation. And so to be in tune with the whole history of the revelation, he says, "Pray to the Father but in my name," and "in my name" is not a formula, certainly not an indication for the choir to get ready for the closing response. It's rather, "I recognize that if Jesus had not come, I would not know you, I wouldn't have the courage to come. I wouldn't know how to pray." So, "in his name" is a statement of gratitude and worship. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15 with Lou Venden, "Talking to God as a Friend" 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/15MMCAG>*

As friends of a friendly God, the disciples were encouraged to present their own requests directly to the Father. It was not necessary for Jesus to do this for them.

They were, however, to "ask in my name," Jesus said. This was not to suggest that if God did not hear the name of his Son, he would be less willing to grant requests. The mention of the name of Jesus expresses grateful recognition that if the Son of God had not shown us the truth about his Father, we would not know how we could approach him. We might not even want to.

In this sense, we have indeed needed someone to "mediate," to "intercede," to "intervene," all Latin-based words meaning respectively "to be in the middle," "to go between," "to come between." Every time we pray in Jesus' name, we thank God for Christ our Mediator, who came to bridge the gap between us and God and bring us the truth about our loving heavenly Father.

Because of Jesus, we know that we can talk with our heavenly Father "as one speaks with a friend." There is no need for some other friend between, for God himself is our Friend. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 76-77. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.} <http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter6.html>

Further Study with Ellen White

Amid the perplexities that will press upon the soul, there is only One who can help us out of all our difficulties, and relieve all our disquietude. We are to cast all our care upon Jesus, and bear in mind that He is present, and is directing us to commune with Him. We are to keep our minds stayed upon God; and in our weakness, He will be our strength; in our ignorance, He will be our wisdom; in our frailty, He will be our enduring might. {SD 27.2}

We may be assured that we need not go into the heavens to bring Jesus down to us, neither into the deep to bring Him up; for He is at our right hand, and His eye is ever upon us. We should ever seek to realize that the Lord is very near us, to be our counselor and guide. This is the only way in which we may have confidence toward God. {SD 27.3}

These things were not written merely that we might read and wonder, but that the same faith which wrought in God's servants of old might work in us. In no less marked a manner than He wrought then will He work now wherever there are hearts of faith to be channels of His power. {CG 43.1}

Many hold faith as an opinion. But saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power. {GW 261.1}

Jesus does not call on us to follow Him, and then forsake us. If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. If in our ignorance we make missteps, Christ does not leave us. His voice, clear and distinct, is heard, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." [John 14:6.] "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper." [Psalm 72:12.] {GW 263.1}

It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, who seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederated with evil angels sometimes bring suffering upon their fellow men in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. {AA 541.1}

Amidst great discouragement, Nehemiah made God his trust, his sure defense. And He who was the support of His servant then has been the dependence of His people in every age. In every crisis His people may confidently declare, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Romans

8:31. However craftily the plots of Satan and his agents may be laid, God can detect them, and bring to nought all their counsels. The response of faith today will be the response made by Nehemiah, "Our God shall fight for us;" for God is in the work, and no man can prevent its ultimate success. {PK 645.2}

Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to His trust. He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him who hath loved you. {2T 319.3}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. Since sin brought separation between man and his Maker, no man has seen God at any time, except as He is manifested through Christ. {MH 419.1}

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity, and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, He who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone able to reveal the character of the Deity to mankind. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {MH 422.2}

The spirit of liberality is the spirit of heaven. Christ's self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. That man might be saved, He gave all that He had and then gave Himself. {9T 254.2}

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory. {DA 758.2}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758.3}

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, humbling Himself, veiling His glory, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed. . . . In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. {TMK 338.4}

Satan had clothed the Father in his own attributes, but Christ represented Him in His true character of benevolence and love. In the character in which Christ presented Him to the world it was as if He gave a new gift to man. . . . {LHU 36.4}

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. “The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:11). His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds. He rules over all the affairs of the universe. {RC 122.6}

Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. . . . The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 99, 100. {RC 122.7}

It will take the whole of eternity for man to understand the plan of redemption. It will open to him line upon line; here a little and there a little (MS 21, 1895). {6BC 1115.15}

Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best. {MH 417.3}

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. . . . {CC 250.3}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. {8T 19.1}

And the same compassion that reached out to rescue Peter is extended to every soul who has fallen under temptation. It is Satan’s special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon. But why should we fear, when God has said, “Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me?” Isaiah 27:5. Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ. {COL 156.1}

There is by our side a witness, a heavenly messenger, who will lift up for us a standard against the enemy. He will shut us in with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Beyond this Satan cannot penetrate. He cannot pass this shield of holy light. {COL 171.3}

Your mind may often be clouded because of pain. Then do not try to think, but just rest, and show that you have committed your soul to God as unto a faithful Creator. It is your privilege to show in your weakness and suffering that you do not doubt the love of God toward you, that you know that He is faithful who has promised, and that you trust soul and body in His hands, that He will keep that which is committed to His trust. {UL 335.2}

Christ has given us no promise of help in bearing today the burdens of tomorrow. He has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9); but, like the manna given in the wilderness, His grace is bestowed daily, for the day's need. Like the hosts of Israel in their pilgrim life, we may find morning by morning the bread of heaven for the day's supply. {MB 101.1}

Jesus never disappoints the one who comes to Him for help. He is saying to you today, "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). He will give you rest in Him. No one who comes to Him goes away unhelped. Take your burdens to the divine Burden Bearer and leave them with Him, knowing that He will carry them for you. . . . {HP 275.2}