

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2022: *Life Everlasting: On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope*

Lesson 6 “He Died for Us”

Read for this week’s study

Revelation 13:8; Matthew 17:22, 23; Mark 9:30–32; John 19:1–30; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 1:18–24.

Memory Text

“ ‘And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life’ ” (John 3:14, 15, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. From the Foundation of the World
- III. A Preface to the Cross
- IV. “It Is Finished!”
- V. He Died for Us
- VI. The Meaning of the Cross
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. While it is sometimes possible to avoid taxes legally, avoiding death is not an option. So the hope of the resurrection means everything to us. Read 1 Corinthians 15:17-18. What implications does this verse have for our view of life after death? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Acts 2:23 and Revelation 13:8. If Christ was not crucified until New Testament times, what does it mean that He was “slain from the foundation of the world”? How does Titus 1:2 help to answer this question? Read 1 Peter 1:18-20. How do you understand the phrase “ransomed with the precious blood of Christ”? According to the lesson, the story of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22:11-13) indicates that there is an element of substitution in the death of Christ. How do you understand the biblical meaning of substitution? Can you think of a better word to express what the Bible is saying through the “sacrifice” of Isaac? What was the sacrificial system designed to teach us about God? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Read Matthew 16:21-23. When Jesus predicted His own suffering and death that would occur in Jerusalem, how did the Peter react? Why did he react that way? Why do you think Jesus responded so forcefully to him? How would you explain the “must” (Greek: *dei*) in verse 21? Why was it necessary for Jesus to suffer, die and be raised from the dead on the third day? This must be very important as it is repeated over and over (Matt 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:44-45; 18:31-34). What does John 3:14-15 tell us about the cross? (Monday’s Lesson)
4. Read John 19:1-30. What did Jesus mean by “It is finished”? If the cross was truly the completion of Jesus’ mission, why has the battle continued for so long? What still has to happen? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
5. Read John 3:16-17 and Romans 6:23. What encouragement do you take from these passages? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
6. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-24. What is Paul saying about the cross here and how does he contrast it with the “wisdom of the world”? What is wrong with the wisdom of the world? What do the following verses tell us about the meaning of the cross (Romans 3:21-26; 5:8; 6:22-23; Philippians 3:9-11)? (Thursday’s Lesson)
7. Read Hebrews 10:4. If the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins, how were people saved in Old Testament times? Did God put their sins on a celestial credit card, to be paid only after the cross? Or was something else going on? (Friday’s Lesson)
8. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. If Christ died for the sins of the whole world, why won’t everyone be saved? Why do you think personal choice would play such a big role in the final outcome? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: The “substitutionary,” that comes in, say more about that. The “vicarious.”

Graham: Ah. He died in our stead. He died as the substitution. In a way, it’s very true. I mean, either He dies or we die. However that’s where the comparison ends, because if God had let you and me and all other sinners die, all it would have done is prove the truthfulness of His warning, “If you sin, you will die.” And God could say to the universe, “Was I right? I said sinners would die, and look, they’re dead.” But the universe would not have had answers to questions two and three that I just mentioned. When Jesus died, there was no doubt in the minds of the universe that God was not killing His Son. They were clear about that. And the death of Christ answers all those three questions. So it’s not either us or Him. His death was infinitely more significant than ours. But had He not died, then what else could God do but leave us to reap the consequences and we all would have died. So in a sense, yes. He died in our stead, but beyond that there’s no comparison.

Lou: But not as a payoff. It's not one or the other.

Graham: It's not His death is equal to all of ours. His death is infinitely more significant than the death of every sinful man or angel who has ever lived. The death of angels and men would not have answered the questions.

Lou: What you're saying then, is that just a simple satisfaction idea doesn't encompass what's involved at all, does it?

Graham: Oh, it makes it much too small. I think it puts God in a very bad light, and it doesn't answer the questions of the Great Controversy. Many folk who prefer those understandings of the plan of salvation do not understand there has been a universe-wide great controversy over the character and government of God. And do you remember at our first meeting, I brought along the evidence that even Luther, hero of the Christian world that he is, could not conceive of these larger issues because he couldn't include the book of Revelation—let alone Hebrews, James and Jude. And this has been the pattern through the years. Not many have seen the sixty-sixth book picture of a universe-wide controversy over the character and government of God. And so they have seen the death of Christ as primarily a plan just to save you and me, for which we are very grateful. It's just that the larger view makes the cross much more significant. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18 with Lou Venden, "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>

As he experienced this separation from his Father, "so great was this agony, that his physical pain was hardly felt. With amazement angels witnessed the Savior's despairing agony." Note the words, agony, fear, consternation. He was really tempted to doubt all that he'd been teaching. He even wondered if he'd rise again.

Maybe he was tempted to believe this legal explanation that the second death is, you die and stay dead forever. And if he was going to pay the price for sin, he would have to die, and stay dead forever. He would never rise again. But he didn't come to pay that penalty. He came to answer the questions, and as soon as he had answered them (he did wait over Sabbath, to add more meanings to the Sabbath, so that every Sabbath we'd remember the questions he'd answered on Friday) he arose a great while before it was day, and he hastened to heaven. And he said to Mary, "Don't detain me! I have to hasten to heaven." And he appeared before his Father, and the angels, and he said, "Was it enough?" To pay the price of sin? "No," they could have said, "You're supposed to stay dead for eternity. You hurry back! We'll not let anybody know you were out." They never said such a thing! They said, "It is more than enough. You've

cleared up all our questions. You've confirmed our trust without fear for eternity." And he came back down to see if the twelve had gotten the message, and they were all in a deep depression. It took him a long time to revive them.

And to this present day, do we really accept what he came to reveal at such infinite cost, that he does not wish to be served from fear. The Father will no more kill us at the end of the millennium than he killed his Son—which leads some to believe that he did kill his Son as he will kill the wicked at the end. How have you worked this out yourself? How did Jesus resolve these questions on the cross? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke*, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

The purpose of the plan of salvation is to restore that trust, to bring the rebellion to an end, and thus to establish at-one-ment once again in the whole universe. All of God's children are unavoidably involved.

Some seem to find it disappointing, even offensive, to learn that Christ did not die primarily for them. But unless God wins this war and reestablishes peace in his family, our salvation is meaningless. Who would want to live for eternity in a warring universe?

Without this larger understanding of a conflict that has involved the universe, it's hard to understand Paul's explanation that Jesus shed his blood to bring peace, reconciliation, and unity to God's children in heaven as well as on earth. But recognition of the war and its issues helps one to take a larger view of the cross and of the plan of salvation and atonement.

The kind of unity God desires cannot be commanded or produced by force or fear. In the course of human history, many tyrants have tried to maintain unity by terror and brutality. But that kind of at-one-ment does not last. Look at what has happened in a number of countries just in recent years.

The kind of at-one-ment God desires is described in the New Testament as a unity that is "inherent in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God." (Ephesians 4:13, REB) People who love and trust the same Jesus and the same God are naturally attracted to each other. The same truth about God that sets them free from tyranny and fear binds them together in the firmest kind of unity. Friends of a friendly God enjoy at-one-ment with each other.

This is where the meaning of the cross is so important. There can be no friendship and at-one-ment where there is fear. Calvary says there is no need to be afraid of God. When God says, "Be my friend," he's not saying, "Be my friend or I'll punish you severely; I'll even put you to death."

You don't talk that way to friends—especially if you want to keep their friendship. And friendship is the whole purpose and meaning of atonement. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 164-65. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter12.html>

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*, #18, “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>

Suppose you had to keep rat poison. (We’re having a lot of trouble with rats now.) So you had to keep rat poison in your house, and you have a young son. And if he touches it and then eats it, he could be very sick, even die. So you say, “Son, don’t touch that rat poison.” I’m going to put it on the highest shelf, the high and locked cupboard. A little later you hear a crash in the garage, and you run out, and there’s your son lying on the floor. He’s taken the rat poison and he’s dying. Would it do any good to say, “Son, I forgive you, I forgive you!” He would just die forgiven, that’s all. It wouldn’t keep him from dying. Nor would it do any good to say, “Son, I don’t want you to die, so let me drink the rat poison.” And you both die. The boy doesn’t need forgiveness. He needs an antidote. He needs healing.

But God didn’t wait for that. God has said, “You really don’t take Me seriously, do you, that sin is like a poison and will lead to your death. Let Me take the poison.” And Jesus dies. And we, like the son, say, “Dad, it’s real, isn’t it! And nobody’s killing you. Sin is really a poison, and you are dying. I will take you seriously from here on.”

The beauty is that God then was able to take His life back and come out living. I’ve made my point. There’s still no legal requirement in that. There’s an awesome truth to be revealed. There’s nothing arbitrary in this thing. God does not want us to poison ourselves. We need healing. Better heed the warning. The results of sin is death, and don’t do this thing. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #12, “God’s Law is No Threat

to Our Freedom” recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

We are not to be driven to Christ. It is our part to come—to make our own choice, and come to the fountain of life. Why should we not come to Christ? for in Him our hope of eternal life is centered. {LHU 331.2}

The purpose and plan of grace existed from all eternity. Before the foundation of the world it was according to the determinate counsel of God that man should be created and endowed with power to do the divine will. The fall of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent. Redemption was not an after thought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam, but an eternal purpose, suffered to be wrought out for the blessing, not only of this atom of a world, but for the good of all the worlds that God had created. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 3}

Before Him who ruleth in the heavens, the mysteries of the past and future are alike outspread, and God sees beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, the outworking of his purpose of love and blessing. Though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet righteousness and judgment are the foundation of his throne. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 4}

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, February 13, 1893 par. 5}

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And while Christ opens heaven to man, the life which He imparts opens the heart of man to heaven. Sin not only shuts us away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. All this work of evil it is Christ's mission to undo. The faculties of the soul, paralyzed by sin, the darkened mind, the perverted will, He has power to invigorate and to restore. He opens to us the riches of the universe, and by Him the power to discern and to appropriate these treasures is imparted. {Ed 28.3}

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}

Well, then, might the angels rejoice as they looked upon the Saviour's cross; for though they did not then understand all, they knew that the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain, that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure. Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished." {DA 764.4}

At the death of Christ, Satan saw that he was defeated. He saw that his true character was clearly revealed before all heaven, and that the heavenly beings and the worlds that God had created would be wholly on the side of God. He saw that his prospects of future influence with them would be entirely cut off. Christ's humanity would demonstrate for eternal ages the question which settled the controversy. {1SM 255.3}

The holy angels were horror-stricken that one who had been of their number could fall so far as to be capable of such cruelty. Every sentiment of sympathy or pity which they had ever felt for Satan in his exile, was quenched in their hearts. That his envy should be exercised in such a revenge upon an innocent person was enough to strip him of his assumed robe of celestial light, and to reveal the hideous deformity beneath; but to manifest such malignity toward the divine Son of God, who had, with unprecedented self-denial, and love for the creatures formed in His image, come from heaven and assumed their fallen nature, was such a heinous crime against Heaven that it caused the angels to shudder with horror, and severed forever the last tie of sympathy existing between Satan and the heavenly world (3SP 183, 184). {5BC 1149.10}

The cross of Calvary, while it declares the law immutable, proclaims to the universe that the wages of sin is death. In the Saviour's expiring cry, "It is finished," the death knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain. The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb,

that “through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2:14. Lucifer’s desire for self-exaltation had led him to say, “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will be like the most High.” Isaiah 14:13, 14. God declares, “I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth. . . . And never shalt thou be any more.” Ezekiel 28:18, 19. {FLB 361.4}

When Christ cried out, “It is finished,” the unfallen worlds were made secure. For them the battle was fought and the victory won. Henceforth Satan had no place in the affections of the universe. The argument he had brought forward, that self-denial was impossible with God, and therefore unjustly required from His created intelligences, was forever answered. Satan’s claims were forever set aside. The heavenly universe was secured in eternal allegiance. {RH, March 12, 1901 par. 8}

The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. . . . The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God. {5BC 1132.8}

God desired to bring all peoples under His merciful rule. He desired that the earth should be filled with joy and peace. He created man for happiness, and He longs to fill human hearts with the peace of heaven. He desires that the families below shall be a symbol of the great family above. {COL 290.2}

The rainbow of promise encircling the throne on high is an everlasting testimony that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. It testifies to the universe that God will never forsake His children in the struggle with evil. It is an assurance to us of strength and protection as long as the throne itself shall endure. {MH 94.4}

Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1076.2}

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {MH 419.4}

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}

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above. But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace. Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled. {DA 37.2}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world's Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life. {RH, February 15, 1912 par. 4}

Up to the time of Christ's first advent, men worshiped cruel, despotic gods. Even the Jewish mind was reached through fear, and not love. Christ's mission on the earth was to reveal to men that God was not a despot, but a heavenly Father, full of love and mercy for His children. {18MR 112.4}

Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then 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. He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character, and to make it beautiful with His own glory. {DA 37.3}

Christ's atonement includes the whole human family. No one, high or low, rich or poor, free or bond, has been left out of the plan of redemption.—Letter 106, 1900. {7ABC 464.7}

The truths of the Word of God are not mere sentiment, but the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin have clouded the understanding is removed.—RH, Nov 10, 1904. {1MCP 98.2}

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}

The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power. While we behold the majesty of His throne, high and lifted up, we see His character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title, "Our Father." {GC 652.1}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. Then the prevarications and accusations of him who had once been an exalted angel were seen in their true light.—ST Aug. 27, 1902. {TA 205.1}