

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2022: *Life Everlasting: On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope* Lesson 14 “All Things New”

Read for this week’s study

2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3, 22; 1 John 3:2, 3; 1 Peter 1:22; Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 22:3–5.

Memory Text

“Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful’” (Revelation 21:5, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A New Heavens and a New Earth
- III. In the Temple of God
- IV. In the Presence of God
- V. No More Death and Tears
- VI. His Name on Their Foreheads
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “During this week we will reflect on the glorious promise of a new heaven and a new earth, including the heavenly temple, the presence of God, the end of death and tears—and, finally, the ultimate triumph of God’s love.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What is the purpose of Isaiah 65:17–25 & 66:22, 23? (Sunday’s lesson) How do 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1–5 build on those images and take them to a new level? God is not making “all new things” working from a blank slate (21:5). Why is it meaningful that “all things new” are made in the context of renewal of the broken conditions?
3. What steps can we take to prevent belittling John’s images, trimming them down with comparatively trivial examples? How do we keep to his perspective: It is like this, but much, much more? How do we use our earthly language to speak about heavenly realities?
4. How can we harmonize the description of the great multitude of the redeemed serving God “day and night in His temple” (Revelation 7:15) with the statement that John “saw no temple” in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:22)? (Monday’s lesson)

5. All ancient cities had temples and Jerusalem was no exception. So it is natural that John expects the new temple to be the most conspicuous feature of the new Jerusalem. Yet, we have the new heaven, the new earth, the new people in the new Jerusalem, but no new temple in the city, because the whole city *is* the new temple. Where would the temple be if all space is sacred? “For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” (Revelation 21:22) How does this impact your understanding of the “heavenly sanctuary”? What is so significant about God’s *unmediated* presence (cf. 21:3)?
6. What do passages like Matthew 5:8, 1 John 3:2, 3 and Revelation 22:3, 4 tell us about the privilege of seeing God? (Tuesday’s lesson) What is the significance of the redeemed being able to “see his face” (Revelation 22:3, 4)? How does this point to a great reversal (Genesis 3:8,10; Exodus 33:20,23)? How is that *seeing* related to *knowing*: God’s name shall be on *their* foreheads (22:4)?
7. Why is it significant for our understanding of the Biblical storyline that God promises “no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying” (Revelation 21:4)? (Wednesday’s lesson) What is the importance of the tears being wiped away at the end of the millennium and not “when we all get to heaven”?
8. Since God will redeem and renew the old world, rather than discard it, and reverse past failures in the new Jerusalem rather than eliminating the *earth* or annulling *history*, how do you understand the text: “the former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind” (Isaiah 65:17, NIV)?
9. Why is it significant that “God’s name shall be on *their* foreheads” (Revelation 22:4)? (Thursday’s lesson) How does the whole section (22:1-5 and even 22:1-21) speak of healing? Why does John say that “the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations”? (22:2 cf. Ezekiel 47:12) What racial, ethnic, tribal or linguistic wounds, that have torn and divided humanity for ages, need to be healed? Why do the nations need to come to the new Jerusalem not only to do homage, but also to be healed?
10. God’s presence in the middle of the human community will be the chief attraction (22:3) of the new Jerusalem. There is no more obligation to “cherish” God, even light in a material sense is less important than the illumination that God brings (22:5). How are the cherishing/worshipping (v. 3), seeing God’s face (v. 4) and reigning for ever and ever (v. 5) related? How is the lost dominion reinstated (Genesis 1:28; Revelation 22:5)?
11. What comfort and perspective does this all bring to you after 14 weeks of study about death and dying?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

COMMENT: Will the possibility of sin still be in heaven after we get there?

Oh, that's a good question to end with, because it's so provocative for the future. Will we lose the image of God when we are perfectly restored to his image? That wouldn't make sense, would it? The image of God is individuality; power to think and to do. God created us capable of love and trust, or of hating him and spitting in his face. Will we ever lose that ability? If the restoration of all things means depriving us of that, why did he build it into us in the beginning? My understanding is God values nothing higher than our freedom and our individuality and our dignity. God has never asked us to do anything that would violate this. He seeks to restore this.

My understanding is, a billion years from now we will sense more than ever this God-given ability to think and to do, so that our love, our expression of admiration for God is freely given, or it means nothing to him. How would you like it if your wife said she loved you because it was either programmed into her, or she was terrified of you? It would be worthless. It would be an insult to God! What then will hold the universe together? If force could hold it together, why didn't he use force in the beginning? If terror will hold it together, why didn't he go ahead and terrorize us early on? He didn't do it. The fact that God has only sought to hold his children loyal by the demonstration of his trustworthiness, of his love, and so on, and of the orderliness of the universe, and of the awful consequences of being disorderly, shown by the death of his Son. By showing all of that, we now have evidence, if we wish, to freely choose to trust God and to listen to him for the rest of eternity.

But now, how could God say sin will not arise again? Wouldn't that be your question? Would you see light in this, pending further reading? One would be simply his foreknowledge—it won't. You'll be free, but you never will rebel again. There's another possibility. If rebellion should begin again in the mind of an individual and God should leave that individual to reap the natural results of his rebellion and his distrust and his disorderliness, he would die. But would anyone misunderstand and as a result serve God from fear? Much theology is involved in your question. My understanding is that since Gethsemane and Calvary, we know that God has not threatened us with torture and execution, but if I pursue my own rebellious, disorderly way, and he finally gives me up to reap the consequences, weeping over me, I will die. But the universe now would not say, "Look at God terrorizing the rest of us by torturing this poor soul to death." They know that God has not threatened his children with torture and execution. They will not misunderstand and serve him from fear. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Exodus*, recorded October 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/3MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known. The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together “the whole family in heaven and earth” (Ephesians 3:15)—these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed. {GC 677.1}

There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. {GC 677.2}

In the earth made new, the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. “They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” Isaiah 65:21, 22. {PK 730.2}

And as the years of eternity roll, they will bring richer and more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed beat with a stronger devotion, and they sweep the harps of gold with a firmer hand: and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise. {SR 432.3}

Sin and sinners are no more, God’s entire universe is clean, and the great controversy is forever ended. {SR 433.2}

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

through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift,— *Immanuel, “God with us.”* {DA 26.3}

Our lifework here is a preparation for the life eternal. The education begun here will not be completed in this life; it will be going forward through all eternity—ever progressing, never completed. {Mar 363.3}

Every right principle, every truth learned in an earthly school, will advance us just that much in the heavenly school. As Christ walked and talked with His disciples during His ministry on this earth, so will He teach us in the school above, leading us beside the river of living waters and revealing to us truths that in this life must remain hidden mysteries because of the limitations of the human mind, so marred by sin. {Mar 363.4}

The rabbis had a saying that there is rejoicing in heaven when one who has sinned against God is destroyed; but Jesus taught that to God the work of destruction is a strange work. That in which all heaven delights is the restoration of God’s own image in the souls whom He has made. {COL 190.1}

Christ is ready to do large things for us, to restore our natures by making us partakers of His divine nature. He waits to link our hearts with His heart of infinite love, in order that we may be fully reconciled to God; but it is our privilege to understand that God loves us as He loves His Son. When we believe in Christ as our personal Saviour, the peace of Christ is ours. {LHU 332.2}

Having undertaken the work of man’s redemption, the Father would spare nothing, however dear, which was essential for the completion of His work. He would make opportunities for men; He would pour upon them His blessings; He would heap favor upon favor, gift upon gift, until the whole treasury of heaven was open to those whom He came to save. Having collected all the riches of the universe, and laid open all the resources of His divine nature, God gave them all for the use of man. They were His free gift. What an ocean of love is circulating, like a divine atmosphere, around the world! What manner of love is this, that the eternal God should adopt human nature in the person of His Son, and carry the same into the highest heaven! {TMK 19.2}

Such transformation of character as is seen in the life of John is ever the result of communion with Christ. There may be marked defects in the character of an individual, yet when he becomes a true disciple of Christ, the power of divine grace transforms and sanctifies him. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed from glory to glory, until he is like Him whom he adores. {AA 559.1}

The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. Now we “see through a glass, darkly.” 1 Corinthians 13:12. We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face

to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence and gaze upon the glory of His countenance. {SR 432.1}

In this life we can only begin to understand the wonderful theme of redemption. With our finite comprehension we may consider most earnestly the shame and the glory, the life and the death, the justice and the mercy, that meet in the cross; yet with the utmost stretch of our mental powers we fail to grasp its full significance. The length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of redeeming love are but dimly comprehended. The plan of redemption will not be fully understood, even when the ransomed see as they are seen and know as they are known; but through the eternal ages new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind. Though the griefs and pains and temptations of earth are ended and the cause removed, the people of God will ever have a distinct, intelligent knowledge of what their salvation has cost. {GC 651.1}