

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2018: *Oneness in Christ*

Lesson 1 Creation *and* Fall

Read for this week's study

Genesis 1:26, 27; 1 John 4:7, 8, 16; Genesis 3:16–19; Genesis 11:1–9; Galatians. 3:29; Deuteronomy 7:6–11.

Memory Text

“Then [God] brought [Abraham] outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:5, 6, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Love as a Foundation of Unity
- III. The Consequences of the Fall
- IV. Further Disunity and Separation
- V. Abraham, Father of God's People
- VI. God's Chosen People
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. What is the meaning of the word “church”? Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental, number 14, is entitled “Unity in the Body of Christ.” What does unity mean and how can the people of God achieve it? Is unity among different denominations possible or even desirable? (Sabbath Afternoon)?
2. Read Genesis 1:26-27. What do these verses teach about human uniqueness in contrast to the rest God's creation? What does it mean to be made in the image of God? Read 1 John 4:7-8, 16. How can these verses help us understand the original creation? (Sunday's lesson)
3. Read Genesis 3:16-19 and 4:1-15. How do these verses reveal the results of sin and its impact on the harmonious world that God originally created? What does the Cain story tell us about God? What can you do to restore harmony within your own sphere of influence? (Monday's lesson)

4. Read Genesis 11:1-9. What happened here that made the problem of separation and disunity even worse? Did God cause the diversity of languages and separation of peoples or did He merely allow it? Either way, what was His purpose and what does it tell us about Him? What are some practical things each of us can do to help heal the divisions of race, culture and language that are found even in the church? Which kind of church community is better, a homogenous grouping or an “all nations” church community? (Tuesday’s lesson)
5. Read Hebrews 11:8-19, Romans 4:1-3 and Galatians 3:29. What elements of Abraham’s faith does each of these texts mention? Is faith sometimes ignorant? How could we apply the lessons of Abraham’s life to the idea of Christian unity? (Wednesday’s lesson)
6. Read Deuteronomy 7:6-11. Why did God call Israel to be His people? When God looks for people to follow Him, what qualities is He looking for? Why does God submit to His own covenant? How can we fit verses 10 and 11 into a positive view of God? (Thursday’s lesson)
7. How does the Genesis account of the creation of the woman from the side of Adam reveal the closeness of the bond that should exist between husband and wife? How does the marriage relationship illustrate our relationship with God? (Friday’s lesson)
8. The Tower of Babel story tells us that ethnic and linguistic diversity were not part of God’s original plan for the human race. How can we transcend such natural divisions today? (Friday’s lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But in the dramatic and significant setting of the great controversy, he chose this time to do it in six twenty-four hour days. On the first day, all he said was, “Let there be light.” That’s all. And then day two, three, four, five, as God in unhurried majesty and drama unfolded his plans for our earth. By the sixth day, what a beautiful place this was. Where now were Satan’s charges that God was selfish? Look at the freedom! He created us in his own image with power to think and to do. And we know from human history that he created us free to either love and trust him, or hate him and spit in his face. It has been done, and he created us able to do it! God even allowed Satan to approach our first parents at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And he didn’t hide that tree in some dark corner of the garden; he put it right in the middle near the tree of life, so that Adam and Eve would see it every time they came to that other tree.

Look at Genesis 2:9: “In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” (NIV)

Of course the God we know could be trusted not to allow our first inexperienced parents to be tested more than they were able to resist. And so Satan was only allowed to approach them at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve were warned not to risk a

confrontation with their wily foe. Isn't that the meaning of that famous key text in 1 Corinthians 10:13? "But God keeps his promise [or God can be trusted], and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm." (GNB) You see, that tree was not put there as a test of obedience—an arbitrary test of obedience. That tree was put there to help them, to protect them. The tree of knowledge of good and evil was not placed there before sin, but after sin. If it was before sin, it was an arbitrary test. After sin, it was to help them and protect them like every other one of God's gracious laws. Then God stunned the universe by sharing with us, as far as he possibly could with mere created human beings, some of his own marvelous creative power. God so designed it that when a man and a woman come together in love, they are able to share life with little people; create little people in their own image. Isn't it interesting to watch our children and our grandchildren? They look so much like us. They behave like us, at our best points and our worst points. Truly, they do reflect our image and God designed it to be this way. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10, "The Reminder of the Evidence" recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG>*

Imagine living in a community where everyone lives as described in the Ten Commandments! That means everybody loves God and everybody loves everybody else; which means that no one is ever rude or arrogant, or impatient. No one insists on having his own way. Can you imagine living in such a community? Would you be free?

Then you go down to the details of the Decalogue. No one ever steals. No one ever kills. No one ever hates. No one ever lies. Everyone can be trusted. And even more than that, look at number ten. People not only never do anything wrong—no one ever *wants* to. That's the meaning of number ten, the one that bothered Paul so much at first. He thought God was interfering too much when he got in that deep. And finally, Paul said that *that* is what really guarantees our freedom. We will live in a place where people not only never do anything wrong, they will never even want to. That means they have really been healed.

And more than that, according to the first commandment, everyone loves and reveres the same God. What kind of a God do they worship and admire? Every member of God's family will admire the God who values nothing higher than the freedom of his children and who has paid such a price to prove it. They will worship a God who asks for nothing more than mutual love and trust. That produces a unity that is inherent in our faith and the fact that we all love and worship the same God. When you have a group of people who live like that, you have real freedom, real peace, and real security. Seen in that light, the Decalogue is a guarantee of freedom. For God says, "I will always run my universe this way. I'd rather die than change it."

Some of us say, “God, please, do not change it. Please, always run your universe in harmony with the principles of the Ten Commandments, or we won’t be really safe and free.” The only difference is that when the emergency is over, there will be no need for God to tell us to love each other and tell us to be decent neighbors. The spirit of truth will have convinced us that it is only right and sensible to behave like that. That’s the meaning of the law being written in our hearts, where a man does his thinking. That means we have thought this through. We agree with God. That’s the best way to live. That’s the best way to run the universe. It is right. That means that our self-control has been restored. {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>*

Lou: An eleven year old asks, “Why are there so many views of who God is?”

Graham: There are so many views. I think they come from many sources. One is from reading the Bible here a little and there a little and not taking it as a whole. Of course, we might view God a little differently, legitimately. But also there is the influence of the adversary behind the scenes. I think among people who really want to know God, one of the greatest sources of diversity here, is that we each have our collection of “littles.” I have my text. You have your text. If we take the Bible as a whole, there is more possibility we would come into that “unity that is inherent in our faith and our knowledge of the Son of God.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #5, “The Record of the Evidence” recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/5MMCAG>*

So sin is a breach of integrity. It’s a failure to be trustworthy. And now we realize that sin is not some artificial, arbitrary thing, sin is a certain condition of the mind and the heart that makes one unsafe to have around. And God proposes to have this universe free and safe for eternity and he says, “I cannot save sinners, because they cannot be trusted.” And sin is being untrustworthy. Then you ask yourself, “Am I trustworthy?” And Paul, who used to look at the rules, now began to look inside himself, and he found he wasn’t doing very well at all. No, he said, “All the good that I would do I don’t do.” Oh, he didn’t break the Sabbath and all the rest, but he realized that he was violating the tenth commandment, which says you shouldn’t even want to do what’s wrong,.

I think that we have been very superficial in our understanding of sin. And that is how so many can look over the Ten Commandments and say we are God’s chosen people. We keep all ten, especially the fourth. But that is exactly what the Jews could say who nailed Christ to the cross

and went home to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. They had eaten nothing forbidden. They paid a double tithe. You name it, they had done it, and they were God's enemies.

They even had the inspired writings. Think how they read the scriptures. Jesus said, "You search the scriptures", you search them all the time, you memorize them but you won't come to me that you may have life." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Revelation, recorded August, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/79MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/80MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

In the creation it was His purpose that the earth be inhabited by beings whose existence should be a blessing to themselves and to one another, and an honor to their Creator. All who will may identify themselves with this purpose. {Ed 173.3}

Created to be "the image and glory of God," Adam and Eve had received endowments not unworthy of their high destiny. Graceful and symmetrical in form, regular and beautiful in feature, their countenances glowing with the tint of health and the light of joy and hope, they bore in outward resemblance the likeness of their Maker. {ML 126.7}

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made "in the image of God," and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth. They were to live in close communion with heaven, receiving power from the Source of all power. Upheld by God, they were to live sinless lives. {SD 7.2}

The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God, but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. . . . The mysteries of the visible universe—"the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge"—afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life. With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that playeth among the waters, to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balancings of the clouds," the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night,—all were open to the study of our first parents. {SD 7.3}

God created man a superior being; he alone is formed in the image of God, and is capable of partaking of the divine nature, of cooperating with his Creator and executing His plans. {SD 7.4}

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}

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. {MH 415.1}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {Ed 16.1}

Like the first is the second commandment—“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Matthew 22:39. The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty. More and more fully do we become partakers of the divine nature. We are fitted for heaven, for we receive heaven into our hearts. {Ed 16.2}

The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man. “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Romans 13:10. The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist: “Thy law is the truth:” “all Thy commandments are righteousness.” Psalm 119:142, 172. And the apostle Paul declares: “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” Romans 7:12. Such a law, being an expression of the mind and will of God, must be as enduring as its Author. {GC 467.1}

“God is love” is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green—all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy. {SC 10.1}

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men. {SC 10.3}

To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others. . . . {5BC 1140.4}

Christ’s love is deep and earnest, flowing like an irrepressible stream to all who will accept it. There is no selfishness in His love. If this heaven-born love is an abiding principle in the heart, it will make itself known, not only to those we hold most dear in sacred relationship, but to all with whom we come in contact. It will lead us to bestow little acts of attention, to make concessions, to perform deeds of kindness, to speak tender, true, encouraging words. It will lead us to sympathize with those whose hearts hunger for sympathy (MS 17, 1899). {5BC 1140.5}

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another. {5BC 1141.2}

When the heavenly principle of eternal love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not merely because favors are received of them, but because love is the principle of action, and modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and elevates the affections. This love is not contracted, so as merely to include “me and mine,” but is as broad as the world and as high as heaven. It is in harmony with that of the angel workers. This love,

cherished in the soul, sweetens the entire life, and sheds a refining influence on all around. Possessing it, we cannot but be happy, let fortune smile or frown. And if we love God with all the heart, we must love His children also. This love is the spirit of God. It is the heavenly adorning that gives true nobility and dignity to the soul. {OHC 175.2}

God is love. The love of the Father and the Son is an attribute of every believer. The Word of God is the channel through which divine love is communicated to man. God's truth is the medium by which the intellect is reached. The Holy Spirit is given to the human agent who works in cooperation with divine agencies. It transforms mind and character, enabling man to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. {UL 104.2}

Sin not only shuts away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. Through sin, the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted; the faculties of the soul are degraded. There is an absence of pure religion, of heart holiness. The converting power of God has not wrought in transforming the character. The soul is weak, and for want of moral force to overcome, is polluted and debased. {PK 233.1}

Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed. It was the tempter's purpose to thwart the divine plan in man's creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God's work in creating man. {SC 17.1}

In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Colossians 2:3. But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him. The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there—every heart responding to the heart of Infinite Love—would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there. He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy. It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. {SC 17.2}

Every promise that is in God's book holds out to us the encouragement that we may be partakers of the divine nature. This is the possibility—to rely upon God, to believe His Word, to work His works, and this we can do when we lay hold of the divinity of Christ. This possibility is worth more to us than all the riches in the world. There is nothing on earth that can compare with it. As we lay hold of the power thus placed within our reach, we receive a hope so strong that we can rely wholly upon God's promise; and laying hold of the possibilities there are in Christ, we become the sons and daughters of God. . . . {ML 274.2}

He who truly believes in Christ is made partaker of the divine nature, and has power that he can appropriate under every temptation. He will not fall under temptation or be left to defeat. In time of trial he will claim the promises, and by these escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust. . . . {ML 274.3}

The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God. {Ed 126.4}

Promises are estimated by the truth of the one who makes them. Many men make promises only to break them, to mock the heart that trusted in them. Those who lean upon such men lean upon broken reeds. But God is behind the promises He makes. He is ever mindful of His covenant, and His truth endureth to all generations (MS 23, 1899). {7BC 942.12}

Abundant provision has been made that those who will seek God with the whole heart may find Him a present help in every time of trouble. {OHC 107.4}

To this people were committed the oracles of God. They were hedged about by the precepts of His law, the everlasting principles of truth, justice, and purity. Obedience to these principles was to be their protection, for it would save them from destroying themselves by sinful practices. {COL 287.2}

All heaven is interested in the work going on in this world, which is to prepare men and women for the future, immortal life. It is God's plan that human agencies shall have the high honor of acting as co-workers with Jesus Christ in the salvation of souls. {5T 573.3}

And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator. {SC 79.1}

God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image.

{DA 294.4}

Through the ministration of angels, God sends light to His people, and through His people the light is to be given to the world. {ML 304.6}

The value of man is estimated in heaven according to the capacity of the heart to know God. This knowledge is the spring from which flows all power. God created man that every faculty might be the faculty of the divine mind; and He is ever seeking to bring the human mind into association with the divine. He offers us the privilege of co-operation with Christ in revealing His grace to the world, that we may receive increased knowledge of heavenly things.

{COL 354.3}

Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and by beholding we become changed. Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity. {COL 355.1}

One of the divine plans for growth is impartation. The Christian is to gain strength by strengthening others. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." This is not merely a promise; it is a divine law, a law by which God designs that the streams of benevolence, like the waters of the great deep, shall be kept in constant circulation, continually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the secret of spiritual growth (ST June 12, 1901).

{7BC 947.3}

Recommended Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets* Chapter 1 – "Why was Sin Permitted?"

<https://egwwritings.org/>