

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Second Quarter 2019: *Family Seasons*
Lesson 13 “Turning Hearts *in the End Time*”

Read for this week’s study

Malachi 4:5, 6; Matthew 11:14, 15; 17:10; 1 Kings 16:29–17:24; 1 Kings 18:20–45; Matthew 3:2.

Memory Text

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse’ ” (Malachi 4:5, 6, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Prophecy of Turned Hearts
- III. Family Reunion
- IV. Turning Hearts at the Altar
- V. Turning Hearts at the Jordan
- VI. Turning Hearts in the Last Days
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In this, the final week of the quarter, we are going to look at some Bible stories, promises, and experiences from a variety of contexts. As we do, we will seek to draw lessons for ourselves today, whatever our context happens to be.” (Sabbath afternoon) To what extent do people have different needs, and how do those needs change throughout different stages of their life and marriage?
2. “Recalling the heart-turning reform begun by Elijah (1 Kings 18:37), Malachi predicted his coming again to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers’ ” (Malachi 4:6, NKJV).” (Sunday’s lesson) In what sense was Elijah’s ministry a “heart-turning” ministry? What is the meaning of the predicted event?
3. What is the connection between a restored relationship with God and restored relationships in our families? How are they related?

4. The Bible tells of a family reunion between the widow in Zarephath of Sidon and her son. What are we to learn from this story, and how do you see it serving as a model for future family reunions? (Monday's lesson)
5. What wisdom do we gain from the confrontation on Mt. Carmel and how is that helpful for our families? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. How is the ministry of John the Baptist a "heart-turning" ministry? "John had been shown that Jesus was the Lamb of God. When he introduced Jesus this way (John 1:29, 36), he literally turned people to the Lord. Andrew and another of John's disciples, John, the Gospel writer who wrote the account of that day, left the Baptist's side and became Jesus' disciple. Not only does the Elijah message point to the need for repentance; it identifies the One who saves from sin, generates excitement about Him, and introduces people to Him." (Wednesday's lesson)
7. Luke 1:17 is a prophecy about John the Baptist: "And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." How is this related to "heart-turning" ministry in the last days?
8. What are the similarities and dissimilarities between John the Baptist and the work that Adventists traditionally see themselves called to do? In what ways do John and Jesus model two different types of ministry?
9. How do the different seasons of life impact various ministries intended to help people at various stages of their own spiritual development?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

This is God's way. God himself has been accused. He does not merely deny the accusation. He says, "Let me show you. My children, let me show you the falsity of these accusations and the truth about myself, and you decide." Imagine the humility of the Infinite One submitting his character and government to the scrutiny and investigation of his mere creatures. But that's God's way, and it is the only way to really establish love and trust in the fullest sense of freedom.

And so we're told that in the fullness of time, God showed his Son publicly dying as a means of reconciliation, an answer to questions, to be taken advantage of by faith. This death was to demonstrate God's own righteousness. For in his divine forbearance he had apparently overlooked men's former sins. This death was to show that God himself is righteous and therefore can set right those who have faith in his Son. And I am sure you recognize Romans 3:25, 26, but perhaps not the words that I used. Would you look on the sheet, Romans 3:25, 26:

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (KJV)

Now there is a difficult word in there, “propitiation.” Propitiation means appeasement, and is a most regrettable translation. Propitiation is what you husbands may offer your wives when you promised to be home on your anniversary at 6 p.m. to take your wife out to dinner, and now its 11 p.m., and you’ve just remembered. So on the way home you find an all-night florist shop and you buy some chocolates and whatever else you can lay your hands on. As you approach the front door with some trepidation, you open it and hand the flowers and the chocolates in. You are trying to propitiate the righteous wrath of your deeply disappointed wife. That’s propitiation; that’s appeasement.

I wish there were time to really analyze that verse. The word translated “propitiation”, I’ll pronounce it. It’s “*hilastērion*.” Do you know that that is the word used, the Greek word, for the mercy seat? Although the Bible does not mention mercy seat in the Old Testament; Luther made it up. When Luther looked at this word which is used for the cover of the ark, the Ark of the Covenant, he found that the Hebrew word just means a “covering.” But that covering was so important that he translated it “mercy seat” or in the old German, “*Gnadstuhl*.” (Now written “*Gnadenstuhl*.”)

Tyndale was a friend of Luther, who first did this in 1524, and in 1525, Tyndale brought it over into English and several versions followed him. That’s where mercy seat came from. The cover of the ark was never called mercy seat until the early sixteenth century A.D. But think of the meaning of what happened before the mercy seat; it was not a bad choice. It’s just a pity that our *King James Version* uses mercy seat in Exodus and mercy seat in Hebrews 9:5, but does not use mercy seat in Romans 3:25, 26. It uses propitiation. I think mercy seat would have been much closer. For this Greek word means literally “a place or means of reconciliation;” a place where atonement or unity and at-one-ment take place. And so I ventured my own translation:

For God showed him publicly dying as a means of reconciliation to be taken advantage of by faith. This was to demonstrate God’s own righteousness, for in his divine forbearance he had apparently overlooked men’s former sins [and they hadn’t died as he had warned, you see]. It was to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time to show that he himself is righteous and that he sets right everyone who trusts in Jesus.
(Maxwell)

In other words, Jesus died to answer the questions about his Father and to prove that God was not the kind of person his enemies have made him out to be. He had not lied about sin leading to death. He sent his Son to answer the questions.

So in imagination let’s go to the cross, and watch Jesus die. Did he really die? The soldiers were surprised to find he was already dead. Crucifixion was a slow way of dying. Evidently something

else had happened. Is it true that Jesus was dying the death of a sinner, to show us how the sinner really dies? Look at the next verse on our sheet, 2 Corinthians 5:21: “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin.” (RSV)

He did die the death of a sinner. And what caused Jesus to die? As you watch him dying on the cross, is God killing his Son? Is he torturing his Son to death? Is God pouring out his wrath on his Son; something the Bible so often pictures God doing toward sinners for whom there is no further hope?

Well, it all depends on the meaning of wrath. What is God’s wrath? One of the clearest explanations in the whole Bible is in Romans 1, the next passage. And I wish we could read at least the whole first chapter. But look at these few verses; Romans 1:18, 24, 26, 28:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth . . . [and it is the truth about God in that whole section]. Therefore, God gave them up . . . For this reason God gave them up . . . And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up. (RSV)

Three times it states in Romans 1 that God’s wrath is simply his turning away, in loving disappointment, from those who do not want him anyway; thus leaving them to the inevitable and awful consequence of their own rebellious choice. Was Jesus given up? Look at Romans 4:25: “Jesus our Lord, who was put to death [given up] for our trespasses.” (RSV)

There is nothing in the Greek that says he was put to death. It says what is in the brackets there. “Jesus our Lord, who was given up for our trespasses . . .” and it is exactly the same word as in Romans 1:24, 26, 28. And versions ought to leave them the same to show the point that Jesus died under the wrath of his Father. But look at the real meaning of God’s wrath. And this was not new with Paul. It’s all through the Old Testament; most dramatically in Hosea 11. Again, I wish we could read the whole chapter. Hosea 11 just verses 7 and 8: “My people are bent on turning away from me . . . but how, oh how can I give you up, Ephraim! How, oh how, can I hand you over Israel!” (Phillips)

Did Jesus understand that this is the experience he was passing through? Did Jesus know he was being given up as Hosea describes it? And Paul, later in Romans 1 and 4. What did Jesus cry just before he died? “My God, my God, why are you beating me up? Why are you torturing me? Why are you killing me?”

No! “Why have you given me up?” He knew.

We should have come earlier, though—to Gethsemane. That is where he began this awesome experience of demonstrating the truth about God’s gracious but awful warning, that the wages of sin is death. We should have come to Gethsemane. And there Jesus fell to the ground dying. The angels were watching. Was God killing his Son in the Garden of Gethsemane, or did Jesus

feel his unity with his Father breaking up? He began to feel the awesome loneliness of being given up. Had Jesus been left in the Garden of Gethsemane, and died there, could you say that the Father had killed the Son?

Now had he been a mere creature you wouldn't know; but the angels knew who Jesus was. They knew that he was God. And they knew the meaning of his words in John 10:18. Jesus said, "No one takes my life from me. No one can. I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up." The angels knew that was the truth. And if Jesus died it was not because his Father had killed him. The Father was giving him up and both of them suffered and the Father was crying, "How can I give you up?" The Son who had assumed humanity was the one who died.

And so two questions were answered in Gethsemane. Is death the result of sin? Indeed it is. Is it because God kills his wayward children? He did not lay a hand on his Son.

But there was a third question that needed to be answered. Why is it so important that we understand that God does not execute his sinful children? This had to be answered, too. And so an angel came to strengthen Jesus to go out to Calvary. And there, once again, he answered the first two questions. But he was also this time tortured and crucified. By whom? By the Father? Or by most devout group of Sabbath-keeping, tithe-paying, health-reforming, Bible-quoting Adventists the world has ever known? They even said he had a devil before they tortured him to death. You see, they obeyed God from fear. Because, as the prophet had said so many times before, they did not really know God.

Look at John 19:31:

Then the Jewish authorities asked Pilate to allow them to break the legs of the men who had been crucified, and to take the bodies down from the crosses. They requested this because it was Friday, and they did not want the bodies to stay on the crosses on the Sabbath, since the coming Sabbath was especially holy. (GNB)

You see, they nailed their Savior to the cross and then rushed home to keep that Sabbath especially holy. To prove they were God's true people. That's the awful result of serving God from fear because you do not know the truth about God. The three questions were answered. Does sin result in death? Indeed, it does! But is it torture and execution at the hands of our gracious God? Indeed, it is not! But what's so dangerous about misunderstanding this and serving God from fear? The service of fear produces the character of a rebel. And can even turn people who are dedicated to obedience into harsh rebels, and God's worst enemies!

Obviously Jesus did not die to win his Father—and how clear Paul is on this. Look quickly at the remaining verses. Second Corinthians 5:19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." (RSV)

Nowhere ever does the Bible suggest that God had to be reconciled to us. Never once! But God paid the price to reconcile us to himself! Nor did Jesus die to pay some mere legal penalty. He died to reveal the truth about God and the falsity of Satan's charges. And even the angels had to learn this. Look at Colossians 1:20, just below: "and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace," not war, but, "making peace by the blood of his cross." (RSV)

As Jesus said in the next verse, John 12:32: "When I am lifted up from the earth I will draw everyone to me." (GNB) Not all men, everyone in the whole family of the universe. You see, viewed in the larger setting of the great controversy, the way in which Jesus suffered and died is the greatest revelation of the truth about God and his government that the universe will ever see or ever need. Correctly understood, the message of the cross is final defeat for the adversary. No wonder Satan has worked so hard to obscure and misrepresent and even pervert the meaning of the cross. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, "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>

Further Study with Ellen White

It was taught by the Jews that before God's love is extended to the sinner, he must first repent. In their view, repentance is a work by which men earn the favor of Heaven. And it was this thought that led the Pharisees to exclaim in astonishment and anger. "This man receiveth sinners." According to their ideas He should permit none to approach Him but those who had repented. But in the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God's seeking after us. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way." Romans 3:11, 12. We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent. {COL 189.1}

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}

Jesus says, "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." The peace spoken of by the great Teacher is larger and fuller than we have imagined. 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}

All the heavenly intelligences were watching with intense interest the warfare that was going on upon the earth—the earth that Satan claimed as his dominion. Every moment was big with eternal realities. How would the conflict end? The angels looked for the justice of God to be revealed, His anger to be aroused against the prince of darkness and his sympathizers. But lo, mercy prevailed. When the Son of God might have come to the world to condemn, He came as righteousness and peace, to save not merely the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but all the world—every son and daughter of Adam who would believe on Him, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. What an exhibition of the love of Jehovah! This is love without a parallel. {TMK 19.3}

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

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}

We are not to think of God only as a judge and to forget Him as our loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this, for our whole spiritual life will be molded by our conceptions of God's character. . . . {TMK 262.2}

Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. They are invited by the Saviour, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." Isaiah 27:5. The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion, but angels of God will contend for that soul with prevailing power. The Lord says, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? . . . Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children." Isaiah 49:24, 25. {DA 258.6}

God has given us every facility, every grace. He has provided the riches of heaven's treasure, and it is our privilege to draw continually from this capital. {AG 235.6}

Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. We pour out our heart's desire in our closets, we breathe a prayer as we walk by the way, and our words reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe. They may be inaudible to any human ear, but they cannot die away into silence, nor can they be lost through the activities of business that are going on. Nothing can drown the soul's desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the confusion of the multitude, to the heavenly courts. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard. {COL 174.1}

It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, that seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederate with evil angels 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. {DA 487.3}

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love. {AA 49.2}

Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God's purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself. The soul, corrupted and deformed, is to be purified, transformed, that it may be clothed in "the beauty of the Lord our God," "conformed to the image of His Son." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Psalm 90:17; Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 2:9. Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain. {MB 60.3}

Love's agencies have wonderful power, for they are divine. The soft answer that "turneth away wrath," the love that "suffereth long, and is kind," the charity that "covereth a multitude of sins" (Proverbs 15:1; 1 Corinthians 13:4, R.V.; 1 Peter 4:8, R.V.) —would we learn the lesson, The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour's life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man's redemption. {SC 21.2}

The Lord declares by His prophet, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3. While the sinner is yet far from the Father's house, wasting his substance in a strange country, the Father's heart is yearning over him; and every longing awakened in the soul to return to God is but the tender pleading of His Spirit, wooing, entreating, drawing the wanderer to his Father's heart of love. {SC 54.1}

Many are the ways in which God is seeking to make Himself known to us and bring us into communion with Him. Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of His hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature. The green fields, the lofty trees, the buds and flowers, the passing cloud, the falling rain, the babbling brook, the glories of the heavens, speak to our hearts, and invite us to become acquainted with Him who made them all. {SC 85.1}

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

Christ came to this world to show that by receiving power from on high, man can live an unsullied life. With unwearying patience and sympathetic helpfulness He met men in their

necessities. By the gentle touch of grace He banished from the soul unrest and doubt, changing enmity to love, and unbelief to confidence. {MH 25.1}

Christ came to the earth and stood before the children of men with the hoarded love of eternity, and this is the treasure that, through our connection with Him, we are to receive, to reveal, and to impart. {MH 37.1}

When Philip came to Jesus with the request, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," the Saviour answered him: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God. {5T 739.1}

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. {DA 641.3}

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}

All who come to Christ for a clearer knowledge of the truth will receive it. He will unfold to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and these mysteries will be understood by the heart that longs to know the truth. A heavenly light will shine into the soul temple, and will be revealed to others as the bright shining of a lamp on a dark path. {COL 35.3}

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8. {SC 34.2}