

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2019: *“The Least of These”*: Ministering to Those in Need

Lesson 11 *“Living the Advent Hope”*

Read for this week’s study

Luke 18:1–8; Matthew 24–25; 1 Corinthians 15:12–19; Ecclesiastes 8:14; 12:13, 14; Revelation 21:1–5; 22:1–5.

Memory Text

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. “How Long, O Lord?”
- III. A Certain Kind of Hope
- IV. Resurrection Hope
- V. Judgment Hope
- VI. No More Tears or Pain
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “By definition, those who await Jesus’ coming and his kingdom are people of hope. But this hope is not only about a future new world. While hope looks to the future, hope transforms the present now. With such hope, we live in the present as we expect to in the future, and we begin working to make a difference now in ways that fit with how we expect the world will one day be.” (Sabbath afternoon) How do we balance the tension between the present and future reality of God’s kingdom without sacrificing any aspect of it?
2. Last lesson’s question was: How do we live out the Gospel? The question asked in this lesson: How do we live out the Advent hope? What is the difference between them? What does “knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58) mean? How did classical Christianity understand this concept? Are there ways to ensure that we embrace the biblical models of reality and God’s kingdom, rather than the escapist mentality of past centuries?
3. Why is hope such an important aspect of Christian life? (Sunday’s lesson) It has been said that “hope is the oxygen of the soul”. To lose hope is to leak life and to close the

door on the future. Why is the future aspect an integral part of the Bible story? (1 Corinthians 15:17-19)

4. How would you summarize Jesus' instructions for how we are to live as we wait for His return in Matthew 24 & 25? (Monday's lesson) How can and should the hope and promise of Jesus' return impact how we live now, especially in the context of helping those in need?
5. "In the end, no matter whom we help now, they will all eventually die anyway. What does this harsh truth teach us about how important it is to let others know of the hope they can find in the death and resurrection of Jesus?" (Tuesday's lesson)
6. "The hope of judgment comes down to what one believes about the core nature of God, life, and the world in which we live." (Wednesday's lesson) How is God's judgment a key part of His setting our world right? How can a message about the judgment bring hope to people?
7. "When this world is all we have known, it can be hard to imagine life without pain and suffering, death and fear, injustice and poverty. Not only is there no more of these things, but this description adds a personal touch: 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes.'" (Revelation 21:4; Thursday's lesson) What is the significance of this in the context of the biblical storyline?
8. The temptation to measure everything by the success of our efforts is hard to escape in our present environment. How does the biblical teaching about the end and hope help to counter-balance that? How is it even more significant today than in the biblical times?
9. Today we know that most of the injustices in the contemporary world result from large-scale structural biases rather than from individual prejudices. We are all complicit in at least some of the biases, but our brain does not easily recognize structural biases. Besides, we do not have the time and energy to discover them and get rid of them all. In previous eras this mattered less, because one was not responsible for the plight of people halfway across the world (and could not do much about it). It was enough to help relieve the predicament of your less fortunate neighbors.
10. Today major global problems impact everybody around the world. In trying to comprehend and solve complex problems on a global scale, it is easy to over-simplify the problem as being one of two sides—one good and one bad. Consequently, the historic complexity gets replaced by a simple, clear plot and may be seen as easily solved by a simple conspiracy theory. But global problems cannot be solved without a global community. If all existing human tribes and institutions are focused on advancing their particular interests rather than understanding the breadth of the global issues, their perspective and interpretation will be incomplete and narrow. We can be part of the solution when we model the inclusive community of God's kingdom.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

You see, the devil is an Adventist. He even believes in the nearness of the end. He believes in God, and he knows all about creation and the Flood, that's no virtue. He even has faith the book of James says. He even has faith in the almighty power of God and whenever he thinks of it he trembles in fear. So, just to lead people to believe in God and to believe in the nearness of the end, and to believe in God's power is not to succeed, perhaps, in doing anything more than adding someone to the devil's side, if you believe those things and they scare you. They scare the devil; he knows he has but a short time. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Understanding the Mission of the Church, #1, recorded September, 1983, Camp AuSable, Michigan} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/1MMUTMOTC>

Now it is true that almost two thousand years have passed since God won his case on Calvary. Satan's lies and accusations have long ago been met. The freedom of the universe has been eternally secured. Why do you think God still tolerates this one rebellious spot in his loyal universe? All the rest have been convinced. We know that he longs to recreate our world, as described in Isaiah, Revelation, and elsewhere, and give it to his trusting saints. Why then does God still wait?

We know that when Jesus returns, he will come to a generation of believers who will have experienced Satan's final desperate attempt to deceive and destroy God's loyal children on this planet. This generation of believers will have succeeded in accomplishing something that one third of the brilliant angels failed to do. They will have refused to be turned against God by Satan's lies. They will have been able to say with Paul, "If anyone, if even an angel from heaven, should come with a different version of the everlasting good news, a different picture of God, he is wrong and we will not believe it."

Lest we underestimate the seriousness of these final times of confusion and deception and lest we underestimate Satan's cunning and persuasive power, there are vivid descriptions of this time to come, both in the Old Testament and New, beyond even the ones that we included in our Bible Reference Sheet last time. Look, for example, at the first one, Daniel 12:1, 3, familiar words to many of us:

There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then [remember the book of Revelation 13, last time? The whole world will worship the adversary except those whose names were written in this book]. But at that time your people everyone whose name is found written in the book will be delivered. . . . Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. (NIV)

Notice in this passage as in many others, the saints who survive the time of deception and confusion not only survive themselves, but they are always described as leading others to righteousness. Our concern is not only to survive, but to bear an encouraging witness to the truth about our God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18, “God Waits For His Children To Grow Up” recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG>

Do you remember Jonah? When God did not destroy Nineveh on time, was Jonah pleased? No, he wished they would be, because that would have proved that he was a good prophet. Was Jeremiah pleased that now they were getting what they so richly deserved? No, he was a much better friend of God than Jonah was. Jeremiah weeps because finally all that he had been predicting had come. How do you think Adventists should feel if finally in the end all the terrible things we have predicted will come? Will we say, “Well, that’s good; God is keeping his promise, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’” and I, in a sense of justice, will be deeply satisfied? Or would you weep? When the wicked die at the end of the millennium, how do you think God will behave—Hosea 11—he’ll cry. God is not willing that any should perish. Think of all the verses like that in the Bible. I think Jeremiah knew God very well. Think how they had treated him. Think how he had been abused, and no one would listen. And yet when the trouble came, he wept over them. I think it speaks very well of him. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Jeremiah and Lamentations, recorded February, 1982, 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 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/35MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/36MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

I have heard servants sometimes charge that friends lack a keen sense of justice. They do not leave room in their understanding of God for just and essential punishment. Their God is simply too weak and kind. “You have a marshmallow God,” I heard one servant say.

The truth is precisely the opposite. Friend-believers have great concern about righteousness, which is the literal meaning of the Greek word often translated “justice.” The English word “justice” comes from the Latin translation of the Greek. (Latin, “*justitia*”)

Friends admire God’s righteousness and would love to be like him. And to do what is right is, of course, to do what is just. But servants tend to think of justice in terms of retribution and punishment.

“I find comfort in the thought that some day God will bring retribution on those who have hurt me so much,” I heard a believer say. “Now, I’m not asking for vengeance, you understand. I’m just asking for justice.” {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 109-110. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter8.html>

More than that, there’s another very gripping thing that may need to happen during the millennium. We will be preparing ourselves to face that awful scene when the wicked are resurrected and die in a fiery moment of destruction. We have to see that someday. Are we ready to see it and not become afraid of God?

I think those of us who “grow up,” who may be alive to see Christ come, we will have been so settled into the truth that we can see the seven last plagues and not become afraid of God. We might be ready to see this. But think of all the babes in the truth who have been saved from the foot of Mt. Sinai. Think of the thief on the cross. Think of all the others who have not had time and evidence to become confirmed in this. Everyone must be ready for that awesome day when God may call to us, to everybody who will be inside the New Jerusalem that day, when God says, “Children, you know what’s coming next. Do you want to come out to the wall and watch? Or do you want to hide in the basement somewhere? You know I’m about to give my rebellious children up, and untold numbers of them are going to die. And you know why I’ve waited so long.”

And so we stand, perhaps, and watch our God, as fire comes down from Heaven and the glory of him who is love will consume all that is out of harmony. And we know, because we are convinced about this, that as the wicked die, God will be crying, “Why will you die? How can I give you up? How can I let you go?” He’s no more angry with them than he was with his Son as he gave him up in Gethsemane and on Calvary. And then when it’s all over, God would turn to us and say, “How awful that was. But children, I have one last question to ask you all: Have I made you afraid? Because if I have, I’ve let it happen too soon, and I would have waited longer.” But hopefully we will be so settled into the truth that we will be able to say to God, and maybe get a little closer and say, “It’s all right, God. There was no other way.” And then there is peace forever, in spite of that awful end. Are we ready to see that and not be made afraid? Because if it makes us afraid, then we’ll serve him from fear, and the obedience of fear produces the character of a rebel, and God still has the seeds of sin in his universe and he has not won the war.

Lou: We are back where it began.

Graham: We are back at the very beginning.

Lou: At the end of the book of Revelation there's that beautiful statement, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." It just struck me as you were describing that, that maybe we will need to wipe the tears even from God's eyes.

Graham: Oh, I like that thought very much. As his children, wouldn't that be appropriate? To get a little closer and say, "It's all right, God. It's all right." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #20 with Lou Venden, "At Peace With Our Heavenly Father" recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/20MMCAG>*

Recommended listening relating to the question, "How Long, O Lord?"

Conversations About God #18 "God Waits For His Children To Grow Up" is available at:

<http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but God's can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hidden desires and longings to the Father of infinite pity, and in the hush and silence of the soul that voice which never fails to answer the cry of human need will speak to our hearts. {Pr 182.6}

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. {SC 100.1}

There is a mighty power in prayer. Our great adversary is constantly seeking to keep the troubled soul away from God. An appeal to Heaven by the humblest saint is more to be dreaded by Satan than the decrees of cabinets or the mandates of kings. {HP 82.5}

In the whole Satanic force there is not power to overcome one soul who in simple trust casts himself on Christ. {COL 157.3}

Every weak, doubting, struggling soul who yields fully to the Lord is placed in direct touch with agencies that enable him to overcome. Heaven is near to him, and he has the support and help of angels of mercy in every time of trial and need. {AA 299.1}

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. Not one that in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. The Saviour is by the side of His tempted and tried ones. With Him there can be no such thing as failure, loss, impossibility, or defeat; we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. When temptations and trials come, do not wait to adjust all the difficulties, but look to Jesus, your helper. {DA 490.5}

Consider the familiar relation Christ here brings to view as existing between the Father and His children. His presence and guardianship are an abiding thing. While we trust in Christ's saving power, all the arts and wiles of the fallen host can do nothing to harm us. Heavenly angels are constantly with us, guiding and protecting. God has ordained that we shall have His saving power with us, to enable us to do all His will. Let us grasp the promises and cherish them moment by moment. Let us believe that God means just what He says. {HP 32.2}

God sends heavenly angels to the side of his children to keep them from evil. If we have placed ourselves in his care, we may rest securely; for he has promised that no man shall pluck us out of his hand. {YI, October 3, 1901 par. 7}

The enemy can never take out of the hand of Christ the one who is simply trusting in His promises. If the soul is trusting and working obediently, the mind is susceptible to divine impressions, and the light of God shines in, enlightening the understanding. What privileges we have in Christ Jesus! {SD 351.4}

All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. {MH 253.3}

The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The risen body of the Saviour, His deportment, the accents of His speech, were all familiar to His followers. In like manner will those who sleep in Jesus rise again. We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love (3SP 219). {6BC 1092.6}

Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy has now been made plain. The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The working out of Satan's rule in contrast with the government of God has been presented to the whole universe. Satan's own works have condemned him. God's wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated. It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created. "All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee." Psalm 145:10. The history of sin will stand to all eternity as a witness that with the existence of God's law is bound up the happiness of all the beings He has created. With all the facts of the great controversy in view, the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord declare: "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." {GC 670.3}

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}

There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be 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 body and mind and soul. {Ed 307.4}

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. We shall share the treasures gained through ages upon ages spent in contemplation of God's handiwork. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations. "Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20) will be, forever and forever, the impartation of the gifts of God. {Ed 307.5}

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}

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation—suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed. {GC 677.3}

God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal home of the redeemed. {AH 540.3}