

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2021: *The Promise: God's Everlasting Covenant*

Lesson 13 "The New-Covenant Life"

Read for this week's study

1 John 1:4; John 5:24; Romans 3:24, 25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 4:16; Revelation 2:11; Revelation 20:6, 14; Revelation 21:8.

Memory Text

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Joy
- III. Guilt Free
- IV. New Covenant and New Heart
- V. New Covenant and Eternal Life
- VI. New Covenant and Mission
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "This quarter has been a study on the covenant, which (to pare it down to its simplest, purest form) is, basically, God saying, *This is how I will save you from sin, period.*" (Sabbath afternoon) How would you define the covenant? What is it all about? Why would the Bible devote so much space to the issue of covenant?
2. "This week's lesson, the final in our series on the covenant, looks at some of these immediate blessings, some of the promises that come from God's grace shed into our hearts because, having heard Him knock, we have opened the door. Of course, there are more blessings than what we can touch on this week. But it is just a start, a start of something that will, indeed, never end." (Sabbath afternoon)
3. The first blessing of the covenant life mentioned in Sunday's lesson is joy. What is the message of 1 John 1:1-4? What brings you joy in your Christian experience? How is joy different from cheerfulness?

4. The second blessing of the covenant life mentioned in Monday's lesson is that we do not have to live under the stigma of guilt. "One of the great promises of living in a covenant relationship with the Lord is that we no longer have to live under the burden of guilt. Because of the blood of the covenant, we—who choose to enter into that covenant relationship with God, who choose to abide by the conditions of faith, repentance, obedience—can have the burden of guilt lifted. [...] Jesus paid the penalty for us, and He now stands in the presence of the Father pleading His own blood on our behalf, presenting His own righteousness instead of our sins." (Monday's lesson) What is your understanding of guilt and its removal?
5. How do you understand Romans 8:1? It presupposes the seriousness of sin and the reality of God's judgment. If sin is not serious and God is not going to do anything about sin, the statement is pointless. Paul points out that the intention of the law (=to give life) is finally and gloriously achieved when God gives resurrection life to all those who belong to Jesus, the Messiah.
6. Tuesday's lesson speaks about the new heart as the blessing of the new covenant (Ephesians 3:17-19). Why is the new heart so important? How does that happen? Why do we need to be "rooted and grounded" in love?
7. What is the significance of the two dimensions (present & future) of the eternal life as the blessing of the new covenant? (Wednesday's lesson)
8. What is new about the mission mandate? (Matthew 28:18-20) How is that a blessing of the new covenant and not a burden? (Thursday's lesson) How do we lead others to a meaningful relationship of faithfulness?
9. Are you happy that we spent 13 weeks studying about the covenant? Would you prefer to study something else? Religion can burden people with a heavy load and life-sapping weight. How does understanding the Bible covenant(s) give us a totally new perspective? What was new for you?
10. How does the covenant reveal God's patience? God did not write off humans after their rebellion. Why is God's work on the human heart through the Holy Spirit so important? Are there ways to become more sensitive to the work of the Spirit *within* us, *through* us and *around* us?
11. God's covenant enables us to see that the end of history is a glimpse of God's intent from the very beginning of history. How does that help us see the Bible storyline and the unfolding of one covenant (not two, four, or six covenants)? What kind of relationship does God intend to have with the redeemed throughout all eternity? How can we grow today, both personally and as a community of believers, in our relationship with the Lamb, who is also the Lion of Judah?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

So the all-important thing is what we're looking for in the sixty-six books. What is the truth about God? He's been accused that he's not worthy of our trust. Has God shown adequate evidence that he can be trusted; that he's a righteous God? If we're convinced that he is worthy of our trust, then we are, some of us, won to trust him. And God says, "That's all I want. Let me be your God. You be my people. Trust me, which means you're willing to listen. Look, I'm the one who made you. I can easily heal all the damage done,"

"Well, what about my sins?"

"Well, what about your sins? I won't let them stand between us. I'll treat you as if you had always been my loyal son." Instead we spend all our time discussing what he's going to do with our sinful past and our feelings of guilt. That's as if we have legal problems with our God. We have trust problems with our God. And I love to put Jeremiah with Paul. Paul grew up with the Old Testament, but he didn't understand this at first. Then after Damascus—and what a revelation came to him on the Damascus road! When the Infinite One did stop him short to be sure, but then talked so softly and so briefly to set a lesson about how you win people. Then Paul went off to restudy his Old Testament and gather all the information from others he could about Jesus. And he put it all together. And then he came out with these same words that Jeremiah did. "I glory in this, that I understand and know God. That he is a God who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth; for in these things God delights." And I think that was Paul's message from then on. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Jeremiah & 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)

Graham: What worries so many people about guilt is the fear that goes with it. I mean, I was caught with my hand in the cookie jar—what is he going to do to me? There is a lot of fear mixed in there. There is also a feeling of loss of dignity and self-worth. The woman taken in adultery felt very guilty and felt very ashamed. And the first thing Jesus did was to restore her dignity and self-respect. He did that time after time. How can we act with dignity, as people created in God's image if we have had our self-respect destroyed? Guilt has been allowed to torture people much too much because of the curse of the legal model, in my view.

In the great controversy larger view, the emphasis is on the truth about God. How does God regard his child who is in trouble? Look at the prodigal son. The father says, "Look, don't even finish your speech of repentance. Come home and get a shower and put on the best clothes I've got and look, I'll give you back your privilege of going to the bank and drawing out the rest of

the estate.” He gave him that ring of authority. He sought to give him back his self-respect. And the son said, “But I am guilty; look what I have done.” And he said, “Look, I’m willing to forget it if you will.”

Who is the one who wanted the son to have it rubbed in from time to time? The pious older brother. But as far as our God is concerned, he’s our physician, he doesn’t want to talk about guilt. He doesn’t even want to dwell long on forgiveness. He says, “Son, you’re my patient; you’ve come home; you trust me. Let’s not waste any time on the past. Let’s work from here on. I want to make you well. And if you’re depressed about what you’ve done, it’s going to retard your healing. So please forget it the way I am.”

Lou: Are you saying then that the real answer to the gnawing anguish of guilt is a closer acquaintance with God and trust in him?

Graham: The remedy for everything is the truth about God. The remedy for guilt is to know what God is like. {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>

What God is looking for is faith. Were we to be judged, as Satan insists, on the record of our sinful lives, not one person on this planet could pass the test. God is not concerned, however, with our sinful past but with the kind of people we are now.

Have we been won back to trust him? Are we willing to listen and accept his forgiveness? Do we trust him enough to allow him to heal us? Have we, like David, welcomed the Holy Spirit to create new hearts and right spirits within us? Could we be trusted with the privileges of freedom and eternal life?

Has all rebelliousness gone, and has love taken its place? As more light has come, do we always say yes to the truth? For we have much yet to learn about our Infinite God. We may know as little theology as the thief on the cross; but if we love, admire, and trust in Christ as he did that crucifixion day, we are safe to admit to the kingdom (see Luke 23:39–43). Like Mary, it will be our greatest delight to sit at Jesus’ feet and hear him tell us more about the Father.

The people Christ cannot defend in the judgment are those whose lives are still accurately described by the records of their sinful past. There has been no real change. They prefer darkness to light, Satan’s lies to the truth. They have rejected the Good News. Their rebelliousness has not been healed. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 122-123. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-11>

But so often we are trying to settle people on all the other matters. If you settle people on the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the state of the dead, tithe, and health, without settling them on the truth about God they might keep the Sabbath as Jesus' enemies did. They might pay tithe as his enemies did. They might read the Bible as his enemies did. We could be developing in this "campaign to win a million Adventists", we could, forbid the thought, develop a million enemies who faithfully keep the Sabbath, practice health reform, pay tithe, and read their Bibles. Now that is a horrible thought. But if we are not clear on the picture of God we might do well not to be in such a hurry. Have you read Ellen White's comment?

"The Lord is not now working to bring many into the truth, because there are so many unconverted in the church."

It would seem to defeat the purpose of God if he were to empower us to go out and misrepresent him. He won't do it. But as soon as we are settled into the truth, so the Holy Spirit could give us power of influence and persuasion to tell the truth about God it would make sense for him to do so.

I do not believe the latter rain or the Holy Spirit will fall until God's people are really settled into the truth. The same Spirit that will settle them into the truth will then give them persuasiveness and influence to spread this everlasting good news about God to the whole world and then the end will come. Which raises the question, "What is Christ waiting for now?"

It's nothing artificial. He is waiting for a group to be like Job, and to be able to pass through the time of trouble. Caused by whom?

COMMENT: Satan.

And the theologians? Think of all the people that caused Job trouble and nobody could shake him. And of course behind it all is the adversary. And of what is he trying to persuade these people? His age-old misrepresentation of God. In the end all theology goes back to the picture of God. And the good news is that he is like this, and that he is not like that. And that's why I believe our whole mission as a church is to picture God as he really is. But if we just go and say he is like this, this and this, without evidence, why would anybody believe us? We have to go with the evidence which is where, but in the sixty-six? Remember the man who was reading in the chariot and he couldn't understand Isaiah? We have to be like Philip who got in with him and explained. We need to be able to help people understand this. And I think one of the most helpful things is to help people keep reading on and not getting bogged down in details.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts, 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)

When God lived among us in human form, he was God, and he didn't say, "Give me your questions, here are the answers and I expect you to believe it!" because it could have been the devil masquerading as Christ. God himself led them through the evidence and when they had come to an intelligent confidence based upon unquestionable evidence he was satisfied, then he revealed who he was. Now think what that says about our God and the way he runs his universe. He does not ask us to believe without evidence. But think what it says about our methods.

If Adventists are going to finish the work, they will become the best explainers of the evidence. In other words, we won't just leave the details of Bible instruction to the folk we call the Bible workers or the Bible instructors. Every loyal member of the family worth his salt will be a Bible instructor and able to explain the scriptures as Philip in the chariot. That's our mission. We should be the best Bible teaching explainers in the whole world. If we want to be known for anything other than the picture of God, our highest calling would be to be very careful, accurate, and interesting explainers of the content of the sixty-six books. That would be, I think, the highest thing we could aspire to. {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>

Further Study with Ellen White

God is not dependent upon men for the advancement of His cause. He might have made angels the ambassadors of His truth. He might have made known His will, as He proclaimed the law from Sinai with His own voice. But in order to cultivate a spirit of benevolence in us, He has chosen to employ men to do this work. {CS 20.1}

The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50. {ChS 251.2}

So long as the people of God preserve their fidelity to Him, so long as they cling by living faith to Jesus, they are under the protection of heavenly angels, and Satan will not be permitted to exercise his hellish arts upon them to their destruction. {OHC 92.5}

It is the greatest joy of the angels of heaven to spread the shield of their tender love over souls who turn to God. {OHC 92.6}

In the future life we shall understand things that here greatly perplex us. We shall realize how strong a helper we had and how angels of God were commissioned to guard us as we followed the counsel of the Word of God. {HP 257.3}

God is the author of truth. He enlightens the darkened understanding and gives to the human mind power to grasp and comprehend the truths which He has revealed. {SL 49.1}

Even in this life we may catch glimpses of His presence and may taste the joy of communion with Heaven, but the fullness of its joy and blessing will be reached in the hereafter. Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain. {PP 602.1}

But even here Christians may have the joy of communion with Christ; they may have the light of His love, the perpetual comfort of His presence. Every step in life may bring us closer to Jesus, may give us a deeper experience of His love, and may bring us one step nearer to the blessed home of peace. {SC 125.1}

Joy in the Holy Spirit is health-giving, life-giving joy. In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world. {7T 273.1}

If our eyes are fixed on Jesus, we shall see a compassionate Redeemer, and shall catch light from His countenance. Wherever His Spirit reigns, there peace abides. And there will be joy also, for there is a calm, holy trust in God. {DA 152.5}

Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm about the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible. In forgetfulness of self, in the light and peace and happiness that he is constantly bestowing on others, he finds true joy. {HP 180.5}

The joy of the Christian arises from a sense of God's love and care for His children and the assurance that He will not leave them alone in their weakness. {HP 75.4}

In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God. {COL 38.1}

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He "will abundantly pardon," He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:7-9. God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit. {ML 250.6}

God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love. {MB 77.2}

God is love; God is, in Himself, in His essence, love. He makes the very best of what appears an injury, and gives Satan no occasion for triumph by making the worst appear and exposing our weakness to our enemies. {TM 265.1}

God is love, God is life. It is the prerogative of God to redeem, reconstruct, and restore. {HP 291.2}

In the Bible the will of God is revealed. The truths of the Word of God are the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding is removed. The words, "A new heart also will I give you," mean, "A new mind will I give you." A change of heart is always attended by a clear conviction of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher plane of intelligence. {ML 24.2}

Every time a soul is converted, and learns to love God and keep His commandments, the promise of God is fulfilled, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Ezekiel 36:26. The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Saviour, working to rescue souls. {DA 407.1}

When Christ abides in the heart, the whole nature is transformed. Christ's Spirit, His love, softens the heart, subdues the soul, and raises the thoughts and desires toward God and heaven. {SC 73.1}

The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices, they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ. . . . {LHU 123.4}

The command, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," would never have been given if every provision had not been made whereby we may become as perfect in our sphere as God is in His. We are to be ever advancing from light to a greater light, holding fast what we have already received, and praying for more. Thus we shall never be left in darkness (*Review and Herald*, Apr. 12, 1892). {LHU 123.5}

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature, that by beholding, we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward. {GC 555.1}

By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. {AG 302.5}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures. {COL 60.1}

There, there is no disappointment, no sorrow, no sin, no one who shall say, "I am sick." There, there is no burial train, no mourning, no death, no parting, no broken hearts; and Jesus is there, peace is there.... In His presence is fullness of joy, at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore! {ML 349.4}

When Christ comes to gather to Himself those who have been faithful, the last trump will sound, and the whole earth, from the summits of the loftiest mountains to the lowest recesses of the deepest mines, will hear. The righteous dead will hear the sound of the last trump, and will come forth from their graves, to be clothed with immortality, and to meet their Lord (SpT Series B, No. 2, p. 24). {7BC 909.2}

To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and a familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and the glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts.... {SD 360.3}

With rejoicing that their redemption draweth nigh, they go forth to meet the Bridegroom, saying, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us." {SD 360.4}

It is a law of heaven that as we receive we are to impart. The Christian is to be a benefit to others; thus he himself is benefited. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 11:25). This is not merely a promise. It is a law of God's divine administration, a law by which

He designs that the streams of beneficence shall be kept, like the waters of the great deep, in constant circulation, perpetually flowing back to their source. {HP 317.5}

When Christ ascended to the Father, He did not leave His followers without help. The Holy Spirit, as His representative, and the heavenly angels, as ministering spirits, are sent forth to aid those who against great odds are fighting the good fight of faith. Ever remember that Jesus is your helper. No one understands as well as He your peculiarities of character. He is watching over you, and if you are willing to be guided by Him, He will throw around you influences for good that will enable you to accomplish all His will for you. {AG 196.2}

Here is our power, our comfort. Of ourselves, we have no strength. But He says, “I am with you always,” helping you to perform your duty, guiding, comforting, sanctifying, and sustaining you, giving you success in speaking words that will draw the attention of others to Christ, and awaken in their minds the desire to understand the hope and meaning of the truth, turning them from darkness to light and from the power of sin to God. {TDG 329.5}

It is a wonderful thought that human beings can speak the Word of God, in simple words of comfort and encouragement. The humblest instruments will be used of God to sow the seeds of truth, which may spring up and bear fruit, because the one in whose heart they were sown needed help—a kind thought, a kind word, made effective by the One who has said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”—Letter 329a, Nov. 16, 1905, to her 19-year-old granddaughter Mabel. {TDG 329.6}

All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {DA 827.3}