

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*

Lesson 1 “The Creator Speaks”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 1:27, 28; Genesis 3:1-8; Luke 15:11-32; Genesis 3:14-24; Exodus 19:16-22; John 10:27-30.

Memory Text

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1, 2, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Communication in Eden
- III. Hiding From God
- IV. God Seeks Humanity
- V. Expelled From the Garden
- VI. God’s Spokespeople
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Neuroscientists are beginning to understand the amazing facility infants have for learning language. By six months of age, babies can understand all the sounds that make up the 7000 plus human languages. But there is one catch. In order for this to happen, the baby must be spoken to. It is God who created this ability for a purpose, one of which is so that He can speak to us. How God speaks to us is what this quarter’s lessons are all about. The gift of prophecy is a way God has chosen to communicate with those who can no longer commune with Him face to face. (Introduction to the Quarter)
2. According to the lesson, God uses the gift of prophecy for five crucial purposes: 1) To reveal Himself, 2) to provide insight into events that happen on this earth, 3) to equip the church for mission, 4) to provide spiritual encouragement to believers, and

- 5) to awaken sinners and call them to repentance. Can you think of any other purposes for prophecy that are not on this list? Since we are wired to be spoken to, God invites us all to listen to what His prophets have to say. (Introduction to the Quarter)
3. Lesson one in this series reminds us that our ability to communicate with God and each other is grounded in His loving act of creation. That ability is also distorted by the Fall. Through prophecy God seeks to share with us how He plans to restore what was lost in the Fall. (Sunday)
 4. Read Genesis 1:27-28. What feature of God's creation of humans is unique to them? What does that imply regarding His ultimate purpose for humanity (Heb 2:5-9)? How are the three-fold relationships Adam and Eve had worked out in Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:9? What does God get out of relationship with us? (Monday)
 5. Read Romans 1:18-20. What can we know about God from nature alone? (Sunday)
 6. Why did Adam and Eve attempt to hide from their Creator after they disobeyed Him? See Genesis 3:1-8. What was Satan's strategy in his approach to Eve? What does this scene tell us about God? (Monday)
 7. Read Genesis 3:9-10. How does the parable of the prodigal son reflect what happened in Genesis 3 (Luke 15:11-32)? When did the prodigal son come to his senses? (Tuesday)
 8. How has sin changed humanity and the way we communicate with God? How then do you explain what happened in Exodus 24:9-11? (Wednesday)
 9. What do the following texts reveal about how God has spoken to humanity after the entrance of sin (Heb 1:1-2; Rom 1:19-20; Num 12:6; 2 Tim 3:16-17; John 14:7-9; John 10:27-30)? Which of these methods of approach have been most helpful to you? (Thursday)
 10. At the age of 9, Ellen White suffered an injury that affected her physically, emotionally and socially. It ended her education and caused lifelong health challenges. She was self-conscious about her appearance, was afraid of God, and felt unworthy of heaven. But Levi Stockman, a Methodist preacher, helped start her on a journey toward a more positive picture of God. She came to see God as a kind parent instead of a stern tyrant. She fell deeply in love with Jesus and served Him for the rest of her life. (Friday)
 11. Have there been other prophets in the period between the New Testament and today? (Friday)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: Here's a question, "Could you comment on the role of the family and marriage in God's overall plan for us, especially as we are called God's children? Also, is there special significance to our planet in having male and female, the two sexes?"

Graham: Yes, I think God deliberately designed things this way; the sexes, the family, sharing with us the power to create little people in our own image. Then we know how difficult it is to bring our children up and yet set them free. How can we keep them from hurting themselves when they're little? Anyone who has had children, anyone who has been a teacher of little children, ought to be able to read the Bible very sympathetically. I think God gave this as a very eloquent demonstration. Right there in Eden the family, the sexes, the Sabbath, many things in that garden were immediately emergency measures. Some emergency measures can be very pleasant, you know. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #11 with Lou Venden, "God's Emergency Measures" 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/11MMCAG>

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?

I mean, 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, because 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 in 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. You know He would not do that. 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, next on the list, 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." (GNT)

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 the 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. {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>

And then when God has discussed the matter with them, He expels them from the garden on the very first offense, which if our parents had done, not many of us would have spent much time at home. But we had parents who forgave us over and over. It would seem that sinful parents are more forgiving than our infinitely gracious God, which can’t be so.

Then why would He expel them on their first offense? And if He said, “In the day you eat thereof you will die,” why didn’t they die? What did He mean by those words? And did He mean, “If I catch you stealing any of that fruit, I’ll kill you”? Does it say that? And we in all reverence ask our questions. God, are you making things clear here? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Genesis, recorded October 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

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

Further Study with Ellen White

When Adam came from the Creator’s hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. “God created man in His own image” (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase. Vast was the scope offered for their exercise, glorious the field opened to their research. The mysteries of the visible universe—the “wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge” (Job 37:16)—invited man’s study. Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his high privilege. Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever. Throughout eternal ages he would have continued to gain new treasures of knowledge, to discover fresh springs of happiness, and to obtain clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God.

More and more fully would he have fulfilled the object of his creation, more and more fully have reflected the Creator's glory. {Ed 15.1}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

Jesus employed no miraculous agency to compel men to believe in him. They were left to choose or reject him, of their own free will. No direct power was to force them into obedience, and destroy the free moral agency that God has given to man. {4Red 86.3}

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}

Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. {TMK 57.2}

Angels of God visited Adam and Eve, and told them of the fall of Satan, and warned them to be on their guard. They cautioned them not to separate from each other in their employment, for they might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. If one of them were alone, they would be in greater danger than if both were together. The angels enjoined upon them to closely follow the instructions God had given them, for in perfect obedience they were safe, and this fallen foe could then have no power to deceive them. God would not permit Satan to follow the holy pair with continual temptations. He could have access to them only at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. {3SG 39.1}

The knowledge which God did not want our first parents to have was a knowledge of guilt. And when they accepted the assertions of Satan, which were false, disobedience and transgression were introduced into our world. This disobedience to God's express command, this belief of Satan's lie, opened the floodgates of woe upon the world.—RH, Apr 5, 1898. {2MCP 562.1}

Those who walk even as Christ walked, who are patient, gentle, kind, meek, and lowly in heart, those who yoke up with Christ and lift his burdens, who yearn for souls as he yearned for them—these will enter into the joy of their Lord. They will see with Christ the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Heaven will triumph, for the vacancies made in heaven by the fall of Satan and his angels will be filled by the redeemed of the Lord. {RH, May 29, 1900 par. 12}

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. {MB 127.1}

The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, bring out in distinct lines God's pitying love for those who are straying from Him. Although they have turned away from God, He does not leave them in their misery. He is full of kindness and tender pity toward all who are exposed to the temptations of the artful foe. {COL 198.1}

Arise and go to your Father. He will meet you a great way off. If you take even one step toward Him in repentance, He will hasten to enfold you in His arms of infinite love. His ear is open to the cry of the contrite soul. The very first reaching out of the heart after God is known to Him. Never a prayer is offered, however faltering, never a tear is shed, however secret, never a sincere desire after God is cherished, however feeble, but the Spirit of God goes forth to meet it. Even before the prayer is uttered or the yearning of the heart made known, grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul. {COL 206.1}

In the parable the shepherd goes out to search for one sheep—the very least that can be numbered. So if there had been but one lost soul, Christ would have died for that one. {COL 187.2}

The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the soul that has wandered away from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine love had come to his rescue he could never find his way to God. {COL 187.3}

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}

Had Christ come in His divine form, humanity could not have endured the sight. The contrast would have been too painful, the glory too overwhelming. Humanity could not have endured the presence of one of the pure, bright angels from glory; therefore Christ took not on Him the nature of angels; He came in the likeness of men. {5BC 1131.1}

What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words,

His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. Divinity flashed through humanity in softening, subduing light. He was the embodiment of the law of God, which is the transcript of His character (MS 77, 1899). {5BC 1131.6}

The things of nature that we now behold give us but a faint conception of Eden's glory. Sin has marred earth's beauty; on all things may be seen traces of the work of evil. Yet much that is beautiful remains. Nature testifies that One infinite in power, great in goodness, mercy, and love, created the earth, and filled it with life and gladness. Even in their blighted state, all things reveal the handiwork of the great Master Artist. Wherever we turn, we may hear the voice of God, and see evidences of His goodness. {MH 411.1}

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}

The angels of glory find their joy in giving,—giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know. {DA 21.1}

He has linked us to Himself by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. This world is not all sorrow and misery. "God is love," is written upon every opening bud, upon the petals of every flower, and upon every spire of grass. Though the curse of sin has caused the earth to bring forth thorns and thistles, there are flowers upon the thistles and the thorns are hidden by roses. All things in nature testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy. His prohibitions and injunctions are not intended merely to display His authority, but in all that He does He has the well-being of His children in view. He does not require them to give up anything that it would be for their best interest to retain. {PP 599.4}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand.

In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {MH 419.4}