

**April - May- June 2008**  
**Parts 1-5**

*Comments on the Adult*  
*Sabbath School*  
*Bible Study Guide*

*The*  
*Wonder*  
*of Jesus*

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# *The Wonder of Jesus* *Introduction*

The April, May, June 2008 issue of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is entitled “The Wonder of Jesus.” Dr. Roy Adams is the author of this series of studies. In these lessons, he examines the person of Jesus and his wonderful life, works, and teachings. After carefully studying through the lessons, we believe that there are many serious issues that need to be addressed. The following articles will be a combination of commentary and extra study material to help those using the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* in their quest for truth and to help them intelligently discuss the lessons in their local Sabbath Schools from an informed perspective.

We do not claim to be the final arbitrator of truth, but we do believe that we should follow the example of Jesus when he told Nicodemus, “We speak that we do know (John 3:11).” The Advent people have been given a message of truth. When the alpha of deadly heresies was being promoted by Dr. Kellogg, Ellen White wrote:

Who has authority to begin such a movement? We have our Bibles. We have our experience, attested to by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. We have a truth that admits of no compromise. Shall we not repudiate everything that is not in harmony with this truth (*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 205)?

Brothers and sisters, it is not our desire to have to make any comments concerning the lessons. It is not our desire to attack any person or discourage anyone. Yet, how can we be silent if materials are given to the flock under the title of wheat and yet they contain chaff? Continuing in *Selected Messages* concerning the testimony of Ellen White about the Kellogg crisis, she wrote:

I hesitated and delayed about the sending out of that which the Spirit of the Lord impelled me to write. I did not want to be compelled to present the misleading influence of these sophistries. But in the providence of God, the errors that have been coming in must be met.

Shortly before I sent out the testimonies regarding the efforts of the enemy to undermine the foundation of our faith through the dissemination of seductive theories, I had read an incident about a ship in a fog meeting an iceberg. For several nights I slept but little. I seemed to be bowed down as a cart beneath sheaves. One night a scene was clearly presented before me. A vessel was upon the waters, in a heavy fog.

Suddenly the lookout cried, "Iceberg just ahead!" There, towering high above the ship, was a gigantic iceberg. An authoritative voice cried out, "Meet it!" There was not a moment's hesitation. It was a time for instant action. The engineer put on full steam, and the man at the wheel steered the ship straight into the iceberg. With a crash she struck the ice. There was a fearful shock, and the iceberg broke into many pieces, falling with a noise like thunder to the deck. The passengers were violently shaken by the force of the collisions, but no lives were lost. The vessel was injured, but not beyond repair. She rebounded from the contact, trembling from stem to stern, like a living creature. Then she moved forward on her way.

Well I knew the meaning of this representation. I had my orders. I had heard the words, like a voice from our Captain, "Meet it!" I knew what my duty was, and that there was not a moment to lose. The time for decided action had come. I must without delay obey the command, "Meet it!" (*Ibid.*, pp. 205, 206).

The call from God down through the ages has been to meet apostasy. Elijah was called to meet a dreadful crisis in his time. Was he well received? "When Elijah was sent with a message from God to the people, they did not heed the warning. They thought him unnecessarily severe. They even thought that he must have lost his senses because he denounced them, the favored people of God (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 261)." So we see that Elijah was considered severe, and even insane, by some, but the acceptance of the truth was the only hope of Israel. It should be remembered that the term "baal" simply means "lord" or "father." Whenever the children of Israel cried out for Baal to hear them, they were simply saying, "Lord, hear us." Furthermore, the inspired understanding of history during the time of Elijah states:

What astonishing deception and fearful blindness had, like a dark cloud, covered Israel! This blindness and apostasy had not closed about them suddenly; it had come upon them gradually as they had not heeded the word of reproof and warning which the Lord had sent to them because of their pride and their sins (*Ibid.*, pp. 280, 281).

Just as with Solomon, Israel's apostasy was gradual, and before they were aware of it they had wandered far from God. It took Israel about one hundred years to slide to the place of apostasy that they were in during the time of Elijah. Today we are approaching one hundred years since the death of the servant of the Lord, Ellen White, who checked apostasy in her day. Today, some consider the concept that the church is in apostasy as blasphemy, but we cannot be silent. Concerning the time of Elijah, Ellen White wrote:

And now, in this fearful crisis, in the presence of the idolatrous priests and the apostate king, they [the people] remained neutral. If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God (*Ibid.*, pp. 280).

Brothers and sisters, we are in a crisis, yet, as in the days of ancient Israel, many do not realize this to be so. We must not be indifferent or neutral. This would be to commit a “grievous crime” and be “equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.” Brothers and sisters, we cannot afford to have this charge written down in the books of heaven against us. We are most certainly living in the last days and this testimony applies more today than ever.

In the time when His wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul anguish, which is expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God’s honor and a love for souls will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any (*Ibid.*, vol. 5. p. 210).

It should be noted that the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is not a single book or one article that might have a limited range of influence. Rather, it is a document that covers not only the English-speaking segment of the church, but, with its translations, many segments of the church. Also, while it has, what is termed, a “principal contributor,” his or her work is not passed on to Sabbath Schools without it first going through an editorial process. Today, the principal contributor(s) must submit their work to the General Conference to be reviewed and edited. At the bottom of the contents page of each *Bible Study Guide* we find the following statement:

The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is prepared by the Office of the Adult Bible Study Guide of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. The preparation of the guides is under the general direction of a worldwide Sabbath School Manuscript Evaluation Committee, whose members serve as consulting editors. The published guide reflects the input of the committee and thus does not solely or necessarily represent the intent of the author(s).

Therefore, the lessons are to be considered representative of the church at large and not just the thoughts of a single individual.

Two years ago, the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* was on the Holy Spirit. Smyrna Gospel Ministries published three special issues on the Holy Spirit in *Old Paths*, our monthly study paper, that helped many to have a clearer understanding of the issues and prepared them for discussions in their Sabbath School classes. Instead of publishing Sabbath School comments in *Old Paths* this time, we are putting them in a separate supplement, this booklet being the first installment. We will discuss the rest of the lessons in another booklet. Much of the important issues about Jesus are dealt with in the beginning of quarter's lessons, so it was imperative that we send this booklet to you as soon as possible. Like two years ago, we will have extra copies of this material available for those who would like to share them with interested parties and even entire Sabbath School classes where possible. Two years ago, the April issue of *Old Paths* had to be reprinted twice to provide the necessary volume that was requested. We pray that this will happen again. Remember, beloved, we cannot be neutral or indifferent on these matters. Christ is calling his people to his righteousness "which is pure, unadulterated truth (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 65)."

Each lesson that we will be writing on will be dealt with individually, and we will clearly mark out the day in the regular lesson or teacher's edition to which we are making a reference. However, some of the material will overlap and will apply in more than one place. We will note some of this overlapping but encourage you to go through all this booklet instead of waiting for each week to come that corresponds to the quarterly. May God guide you into truth.

# *The Wonder of Jesus Lesson 1*

## *Who Was Jesus?*

Lesson 1 of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* seeks to answer the question “Who was Jesus?” The question of Jesus to his disciples, as recorded in Matthew 16:13, is focused upon “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” Jesus asked this to give the disciples “an opportunity of confessing their faith in Him that they might be strengthened for the coming trial (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 411).” The disciples replied, “Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets (Matthew 16:14).” In the *Bible Study Guide*, Dr. Adams presents very good reasons why the people might have confused Jesus with these biblical figures. The important question to us is, as it was to the disciples, “What do you think of Christ?”

How is Jesus revealed in the gospels? What is the testimony of the Scriptures about his identity? No personage in the Bible would be better qualified to testify as to the identity of Jesus than God the Father who “cannot lie (Titus 1:2).” In Matthew 3:17, he stated: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” He repeated this, as recorded in Matthew 17:5 in the story of the Mount of Transfiguration, with the additional words, “hear ye him.” Here we have the testimony of God that Jesus is his Son.

In your mind’s eye imagine being upon that mountain with Peter, James, and John. You hear a majestic voice from heaven pronouncing the identity of the Saviour to a perishing world, and what do you hear said? Interestingly, you do not hear: “This is the second person of the mysterious trinity.” You do not hear, “This is the Supreme God.” No, you hear: “This is *my beloved Son*, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him,” and this confession perfectly matches what Jesus asked those he called to believe. To the man who had been born blind Jesus asked: “Dost thou believe on the Son of God (John 9:35)?” This great truth is the dividing line between his followers and the world. His disciples believed and were saved; the others denied and perished. Jesus never *claimed* a higher nature than to be the Son of God, and he never required his disciples to *believe* that he possessed any higher nature.

In John 10:36, Jesus said: “Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because *I said, I am the Son of God?*” When on trial before Caiaphas, Jesus was asked, under oath, who he was. The inspired record states:

And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed (Mark 14:60, 61)?

Matthew includes Caiaphas' words, "I adjure thee by the living God (Matthew 26:63)." Until this point, Christ had been silent, but now he replies plainly: "I am (Mark 14:62)." Ellen G. White adds this insightful comment:

To this appeal Christ could not remain silent. There was a time to be silent, and a time to speak. He had not spoken until directly questioned. He knew that to answer now would make His death certain. But the appeal was made by the highest acknowledged authority of the nation, and in the name of the Most High. Christ would not fail to show proper respect for the law. *More than this, His own relation to the Father was called in question. He must plainly declare His character and mission.* Jesus had said to His disciples, "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven." Matt. 10:32. Now by His own example He repeated the lesson (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 706, 707). (All emphasis in this booklet supplied unless otherwise noted.)

When Jesus hung upon the cross, those who taunted him echoed his claim to be the Son of God: "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for *he said, I am the Son of God* (Matthew 27:43)."

God's testimony is that Jesus is his Son, and Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. Let us see what the disciples thought. To the inquiry of Jesus, Peter replied:

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 16:16, 17).

Over and over the disciples testified that Jesus was the Son of God. After the conversion of Paul, the record is that "straightway [after his conversion] he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God (Acts 9:20)." Philip accepted the confession of the Ethiopian eunuch, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37)" and baptized him. And John declared that he wrote his gospel so "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:31)."

The clear, unambiguous claim of inspiration is that Jesus is the Son of God. For most people, this confession does not on the surface cause any tension. Virtually all professed Christians claim that Jesus is *the Son of God*. Catholics claim he is the Son of God and so do Protestants, but the question arises, “In what way is Jesus the Son of God?” The Bible says that we are the sons of God by adoption:

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Galatians 4:4, 5).

Furthermore, the angels are sons of God by creation: “The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38:7).” But what about Jesus? What does the Bible say about his relationship to God? In perhaps the most well-known and well-loved Bible verse, Jesus himself stated:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his *only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

Jesus said that he was the “only begotten Son” of God. This agrees with what John wrote in his first epistle: “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and *every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him* (1 John 5:1).” Here the one who begets is the Father and the one begotten of him is the Son. In fact, the Apostle John states that humanity may understand the measure of God’s love by the fact that he gave his only begotten Son for us. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him (1 John 4:9).” Ellen White perfectly agreed with this when she wrote:

A complete offering has been made; for “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,” – *not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner; but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person*, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (*The Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895).

At this point, if you use the NIV Bible as the quarterly does for the most part, you might notice a difference between what we have noted from John 3:16 and the NIV which says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have

eternal life.” Notice instead of stating that Jesus is the “only begotten Son,” the NIV calls Jesus God’s “one and only Son.” The NIV parallels most of the newer translations such as the RSV which call Jesus God’s “only Son.” These newer versions are not translated from the same Greek text that the KJV is translated from, and many sad results are seen from this. (We will cover “The Mystery of His Deity” in Part 2 of this study, and we will look at this verse and the issue of the Greek text carefully.)

The trinity doctrine, while calling Jesus “God the Son,” an expression never used by inspiration, actually denies that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. Jesus is, instead, understood to be the second person of the trinity. This doctrine teaches that God is a single being (hypostases) who is three persons assuming the roles of father, son, and holy spirit. One person of this single being assumed the role of a father, one person assumed the role of a son, and the third person assumed the role of an ever-present spirit. These roles are considered to be interchangeable within the one hypostases. (See Chapter 3 of this booklet and the lesson for April 10 in the *Bible Study Guide*.) The trinity doctrine denies the true relationship between God and Christ.

Interestingly, the *Handbook for Today’s Catholic* states “The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church (p. 16).” While Adventists have identified the antichrist with the papacy, it is usually connected to the Sabbath/Sunday issue; however, when the Bible speaks of antichrist, it is in connection to the teaching of Christ and God.

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father (1 John 2:22, 23).

Here we see it is important to understand that God is our Father and Jesus is his Son, for those who deny this are antichrist! This may seem like a harsh or difficult statement for some to accept. How is it possible that the trinity doctrine could be wrong when most all of Christendom follows this teaching?

We must remember that the Bible never portrays the majority of this world to be in the right. In fact, the majority is seen to be those who are outside of God’s Word and will finally be outside the city of God when the final destruction of the wicked occurs. Jesus said: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and *many* there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it (Matthew 7:13, 14).” Here Jesus contrasts the “few” saved with the “many” lost. Jesus

also said, “Fear not, *little flock*; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32).” “For many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew 22:14).” And the book of Revelation says that wickedness is so widespread in the last days that “all the world wondered after the beast (Revelation 13:3).”

Writing in the *Bible Study Guide*, Dr. Adams states: “If Jesus was simply a man who lived two thousand years ago in Palestine, then the Christian church has been involved in the most reprehensible hoax in the history of the world (lesson for Thursday, April 3).” We can agree with this, but while Jesus was truly the son of man, he is also the divine Son of God who is fully worthy of our worship. The most cruel and “reprehensible hoax in ... history” has been played upon the world, however, in the name of the trinity doctrine that not only denies Jesus to be the literal Son of God but also denies the Fatherhood of God, as well as the full death of Jesus upon the cross and many other great truths of the gospel. In fact, many, perhaps most, Seventh-day Adventists do not know that all the early pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism were non-trinitarians. To a man, they rejected the trinity and the main reason was that the trinity denied the full death of Jesus and thus failed to provide an atonement for sinners. (For documentation on this and detailed information on the truth about God and the problems of the trinity doctrine, write to us at the address on the back page and request the book *The Foundation of Our Faith*. See page 37 for details.)

As we noted, inspiration states that the whole world wonders after the beast and in the rejection of Jesus as the literal begotten Son of God, the world confederates with the papacy. Rome invented a teaching called the doctrine of *eternal generation* to try to state their belief using some biblical terminology. The doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son is defined as:

An eternal personal act of the Father, wherein, by necessity of nature, not by choice of will, He generates the person (not the essence) of the Son, by communicating to Him the whole indivisible substance of the Godhead, without division, alienation, or change, so that the Son is the express image of His Father's person, and eternally continues, not from the Father, but in the Father, and the Father in the Son (A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, p. 182, quoted in the Theopedia, [http://www.theopedia.com/Generation\\_of\\_the\\_Son](http://www.theopedia.com/Generation_of_the_Son)).

What this says, in essence, is that the Father has forever in times past generated, is generating now, and will be forever in the future generating the son. This son is not a separate being from the Father but a part of the “indivisible substance of the Godhead, without division, alienation.” At the

same time, according to the accepted church creeds, Christ is said to be “coeternal and coequal” with the Father and the Holy Spirit and that Christ and the Holy Spirit are as much *God* as the Father is God. (See the Athanasian Creed.)

Are you confused by this? Do not be concerned, for nobody can figure this out and will never be able to, for it is confusion and error. Some Protestants believe in the doctrine of eternal generation or versions of it. It is written into the Westminster Confession of Faith. Even though most Protestants reject this teaching, they still do not believe that Jesus is the literal begotten Son of God. If they did they would stop using Bibles such as the NIV, RSV, and others that do not speak of Jesus being the begotten Son of God. Instead, most Protestants believe that the terms father and son are merely used to express an endearing relationship between the first and second person of the trinity. But if this is so, why is not the Holy Spirit given some similar term?

The real hoax is that almost all of professed Christendom says that the sonship of Jesus is symbolic or figurative and they deny the literal sonship of Jesus. The Jehovah’s Witnesses, while denying the trinity, also deny the literal sonship of Jesus, stating that he is a creature, being the highest and first of God’s creation. However, the Bible is very plain about Jesus that “all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist (Colossians 1:16, 17).”

The Jews deny Jesus to be the Messiah or the son of God. “Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah because he didn’t fulfill Jewish expectations of the Messiah ([http://judaism.about.com/library/3\\_askrabbi\\_c/bl\\_jesus.htm](http://judaism.about.com/library/3_askrabbi_c/bl_jesus.htm)).” The concept of God as a trinity in Judaism is considered heretical and a deviation from strict monotheism. The trinity is considered by Jews to be akin to polytheism.

Islam believes that Jesus was a prophet. In the Koran, we read: “Say ye: ‘We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: And we bow to Allah (in Islam)’ (Su 2:136).” Even though the Koran states that Jesus was a prophet, it denies that Jesus is more than a prophet, as we see that all the prophets, including Jesus, are considered to be on the same level. The Koran further states: “For Allah is One God: Glory be to Him: (Far Exalted is He) above having a son (Su 4:171).”

While some pagans (Buddhists, Hindus, etc.) may consider Jesus to be a great philosopher, they all deny him as the Son of God. Thus, Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Islam, and all paganism reject Jesus as the only begotten Son of God.

Perhaps you are wondering at this time, “Isn’t Jesus described in the Bible as divine? If he is the only begotten Son of God, can he also be divine or does his being divine exclude him from being the begotten Son of God?” To answer this, we should note that the term “God” is used in at least four ways in the Bible. At times, “god” is used to make reference to a false god, something that is no god at all. “Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their *god*, and to rejoice: for they said, Our *god* hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand (Judges 16:23).” The word “God” has been used of men such as Moses, who have stood in the place of God. “And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a *god* to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet (Exodus 7:1).” “God” is most often used in the Bible, however, to denote the Supreme Being of the universe, the Father. “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:6).” “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him (1 Corinthians 8:6).” Finally, “God” is used to denote the divine nature. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).” Here Jesus (the Word) is called God in the sense of being divine or having the nature of God, but he is clearly not the same Being described as the God that the Word was with. In fact, in John 17:3, Jesus called his Father “the only true God,” and in Mark 12:29, 30 Jesus tells us what is the greatest commandment of all: “Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is *one Lord*: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.”

While the Bible describes Jesus as being God in the sense of having divinity and being fully worthy of worship (Hebrews 1:6), he is not the Supreme Being of the universe, the Father. It is the Father who is called “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:17).” Jesus called the Father “my God” (Matthew 27:46; John 20:17; and Revelation 3:12), but Jesus is never called the God of the Father.

To be baptized or retain membership in most churches today, one must believe that Jesus is the second person of the trinity. Acceptance of the trinity doctrine is vital to being considered orthodox today, and the World Council of Churches has the trinity doctrine as the basis of its membership

requirements. No such test, however, is ever given in the Word of God. During the time that the prophetess Ellen G. White was alive, no such test was ever asked of anyone in order to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Why should we add to God's Word a requirement that doctrinally joins us to the whore of Revelation 17? Should we be dissatisfied with a confession that the Saviour approved? Have we been given license to add to the divine testimony? Going back to where we began in Matthew 16, Jesus said to Peter concerning his confession, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18)." The rock that Christ establishes his church upon is not Peter but rather the truth which Peter professed about Jesus.

Two statements found in *The Desire of Ages* show that Ellen White strongly agreed with these statements of Scripture. Concerning Peter's confession as recorded in Matthew 16:16, we read: "Peter had expressed *the truth* which is the *foundation* of the church's faith (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 413)." We also find a parallel statement on page 412: "*The truth* which Peter had confessed is *the foundation* of the believer's faith."

The Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ, the one revealed in Scripture as the "only begotten Son of God," is the foundation of the believer's faith. Writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul stated:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Ephesians 2:19, 20).

The apostles and prophets are not the foundation of the believer's faith. The apostles' and prophets' foundation is the same as ours: Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone. In both Ephesians and Romans, Paul applies the prophecy of Isaiah 28:16 to Jesus, as does Peter in 1 Peter 2:6.

Therefore thus saith the Lord, even the Lord, Behold, I lay for the foundation of Sion a costly stone, a choice, a corner-stone, a precious stone, for its foundations; and he that believes on him shall by no means be ashamed (Isaiah 28:16 Septuagint).

Jesus said that it was life eternal to not only know God but also the one he sent: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3)." Commenting upon this verse in connection with the foundation of our faith, Sister White wrote:

Now, as never before, we need to understand the true science of education. If we fail to understand this, we shall never have a place in the kingdom of God. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." If this is the price of heaven, shall not our education be conducted on these lines? Christ must be everything to us. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." What a foundation is here laid for the faith of those who shall live in all ages (*The Christian Educator*, August 1, 1897).

Standing in the shadow of the cross, the Saviour here presented principles that lie at the foundation of all true Christian experience. Lifting up his eyes unto heaven, he said: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (*The Review and Herald*, July 19, 1906)."

The knowledge, in itself, of this wonderful truth is no grounds for glorification. We cannot obtain this knowledge apart from God. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know (Job 11:7, 8)?" We are told that God's thoughts are much higher than our thoughts (Isaiah 55:9). Only God can reveal the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Our first work is to be converted. We are individually to be born again. We are to be able to represent in character the new life in Christ. *The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He sent is of primary importance, for Christ declares that it is eternal life to the believer* (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 17, p. 358).

It is only as Jesus Christ is exalted to his highest character as the Son of God that he can be truly lifted up in the fullest sense as the Saviour of man. Paul writes, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11)."

# *The Wonder of Jesus Lesson 2*

## *The Mystery of His Deity*

This lesson closely interlocks with the first lesson of the *Bible Study Guide*, for it is difficult to deal with the person of Jesus without discussing his divinity.

Please allow us to make very clear a position that has often been misunderstood. To understand that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God does not demand a denial of his divinity. On the contrary, the fact that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God is the guarantee of his divinity. Genesis 5:3 states a principle that is vital to us. "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." Adam could only beget a son in his own likeness because that is the rule of heredity. We know that Jesus is of the divine nature because he is the only begotten Son of God. We noted in Chapter 2 of this booklet, all of the Adventist pioneers were non-trinitarians. No man had as great an influence upon the early Advent movement as Elder James White, a prolific writer, dynamic preacher, and able administrator. Baptized at the age of fifteen, James White, like Joshua Himes and Joseph Bates, was a member of the Christian Connection. After hearing William Miller preach in 1842, he became an enthusiastic adherent of the Advent doctrine. He was ordained the following year and later married Ellen G. Harmon. Although he died at the early age of sixty, he was a driving force among the Advent people for over thirty-five years. His views carried weight in the church and were representative of early Adventism. One of the first pronouncements on the subject of the trinity from Elder White came in an early issue of *The Day-Star*. In an exposition on Jude 3 and 4, he wrote:

The way spiritualizers this way have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old unscriptural trinitarian creed, viz. that Jesus Christ is the eternal God, though they have not one passage to support it, while we have plain scripture testimony in abundance that he is the Son of the eternal God (*The Day Star*, January 24, 1846).

The inexplicable trinity that makes the godhead three in one and one in three, is bad enough; but that ultra Unitarianism that makes Christ inferior to the Father is worse. Did God say to an inferior, "Let us make man in our image?" (*The Review and Herald*, November 29, 1877)

So while Elder White strongly objected to the doctrine of the trinity, he upheld the divinity of Jesus Christ. In fact, he wrote a year earlier: "The

S. D. Adventists hold the divinity of Christ so nearly with the Trinitarian, that we apprehend no trial here (*The Review and Herald*, September 12, 1876).” This cannot be an endorsement of the trinity doctrine for we find just a year later Elder White writing negatively about it, but it is a positive statement concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ.

In his book *The Atonement*, Elder J. H. Waggoner wrote concerning the deity of Jesus Christ:

Many theologians really think that the Atonement, in respect to its dignity and efficacy, rests upon the doctrine of a trinity. But we fail to see any connection between the two. To the contrary, the advocates of that doctrine really fall into the difficulty which they seem anxious to avoid. Their difficulty consists in this: They take the denial of a trinity to be equivalent to a denial of the divinity of Christ. Were that the case, we should cling to the doctrine of a trinity as tenaciously as any can; but it is not the case. They who have read our remarks on the death of the Son of God know that we firmly believe in the divinity of Christ; but we cannot accept the idea of a trinity, as it is held by Trinitarians, without giving up our claim on the dignity of the sacrifice made for our redemption.

And here is shown how remarkably the widest extremes meet in theology. The highest Trinitarians and lowest Unitarians meet and are perfectly united on the death of Christ--the faith of both amounts to Socinianism. Unitarians believe that Christ was a prophet, an inspired teacher, but merely human; that his death was that of a human body only. Trinitarians hold that the term "Christ" comprehends two distinct and separate natures: one that was merely human; the other, the second person in the trinity, who dwelt in the flesh for a brief period, but could not possibly suffer, or die; that the Christ that died was only the human nature in which the divinity had dwelt. Both classes have a human offering, and nothing more. No matter how exalted the pre-existent Son was; no matter how glorious, how powerful, or even eternal; if the manhood only died, the sacrifice was only human. And so far as the vicarious death of Christ is concerned, this is Socinianism. Thus the remark is just, that the doctrine of a trinity degrades the Atonement, resting it solely on a human offering as a basis (*The Atonement*, pp. 164-166).

Elder Waggoner’s son, E. J. Waggoner, who would later become famous due to his presentations at the 1888 General Conference, followed his father as editor of *The Signs of the Times*. In response to a book written by a Methodist minister, who, among other claims, stated that Seventh-day Adventists did not believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, Waggoner wrote a

series of articles on “The Divinity of Christ” March 25, 1889, through April 22, 1899. In these articles we find many of the thoughts that appeared the following year in his book *Christ and His Righteousness*. In the first of his *Signs* articles, we read the following words:

When the Doctor states that Seventh-day Adventists deny the divinity of Christ, we know that he writes recklessly. We are fully persuaded in our own mind that he knows better; but be that as it may, the statement has been made so often by men who professed to know whereof they were speaking, that many have come to believe it . . .

So perfectly did Christ represent the Father, that for one to say that he had not seen the Father was equivalent to saying that he had not seen Christ. For this we have the words of Christ himself; therefore those who refuse to accept him as divine, do so simply because they cannot believe his word. Those who do not believe that Christ, as he was here on earth, was divine, do not give him credit for being even an honest man. The very name that was given to Jesus,—Emmanuel—signifies, “God with us.” See Matt. 1:23 (*The Signs of the Times*, March 25, 1899).

While clearly proclaiming that Jesus was of the divine nature, Waggoner also clearly taught that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God.

In arguing the perfect equality of the Father and the Son, and the fact that Christ is in very nature God, we do not design to be understood as teaching that the Father was not before the Son. It should not be necessary to guard this point, lest some should think that the Son existed as soon as the Father; yet some go to that extreme, which adds nothing to the dignity of Christ, but rather detracts from the honor due him, since many throw the whole thing away rather than accept a theory so obviously out of harmony with the language of Scriptures, that Jesus is the *only begotten Son* of God. He was begotten, not created. He is of the substance of the Father, so that in his very nature he is God; and since this is so “it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” Col. 1:19.

Christ is the Son of God. While both are of the same nature, the Father is first in point of time. He is also greater in that he had no beginning, while Christ’s personality had a beginning (*Ibid.*, April 8, 1899).

Elder White and the two Waggoners were representative of the Seventh-day Adventist body as a whole and during the Kellogg crisis that was to come a little more than a decade later, Ellen White warned that Kellogg was “departing from the faith which they have held sacred for the

past fifty years (*Special Testimonies Series B*, no. 2, p. 61).” During that time, the trinity doctrine was rejected and the divinity of Christ was exalted.

Let us now look at statements in the *Bible Study Guide*.

The first section of Lesson 2 emphasizes the deity and pre-existence of Jesus. In the lesson for Sunday, April 6, Micah 5:2 is noted:

The word *mosa'ah* (KJV: “goings forth”; RSV: “origin”) in Micah 5:2 is not easy to translate. But the other part of the verse clearly refers not only to the preexistence of the coming Ruler but also to His eternal preexistence “from everlasting.”

The word *mosa'ah*, according to *Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon*, means origin. We now have what are seemingly two different thoughts in the text. One thought seems to speak of eternity and the other thought seems to speak of something not absolutely eternal in the sense that it has an origin. Adams has chosen to interpret *mosa'ah* to not mean origin because of the use of the expression “from everlasting.” The Hebrew for this phrase is *owlam*. *Owlam* is a word that can mean everlasting, but it also can mean a qualified length of time. The Passover was said to be “an ordinance for ever [*owlam*] (Exodus 12:17),” but the Passover, along with the other feast days, was to not be observed after the cross. Under certain circumstances, a Hebrew slave was to “serve him (his master) for ever [*owlam*] (Exodus 21:6).” “Hannah ... said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD and there abide for ever [*owlam*] (1 Samuel 1:22).” So we see that while *owlam* may have an absolute eternal meaning, it is not always so. Elder E. J. Waggoner expressed his understanding of Micah 5:2 in this way:

We know that Christ “proceeded forth and came from God” (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man (*Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 9).

While we can agree, as the *Bible Study Guide* states in the lesson for April 6, that Jesus was “before all time,” it should be noted that, according to Colossians 1:16, all things “that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible” were created by Jesus Christ. This would also include the invisible concepts of time and space, concepts which cosmologists still do not understand completely. If Jesus is the creator of time and if eternity is a concept based in time, then there “never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God (*The Signs of the Times*, August 29, 1900).”

At the bottom of the lesson for April 6 is a reference to Isaiah 9:6: “*The Son is the Father, 'the Everlasting Father'?*” This might be confusing to

some, as it seems to be saying that Jesus, the Son, is God the Father, but is this what the verse means? Surely Jesus is not God the Father, but he is called the “everlasting Father.” What can this mean? If we remember that Jesus is the one by whom God created all things, then it is not difficult to understand. Let us notice what Isaiah 8:18 says: “Behold, I and the *children whom the LORD hath given me* are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.” Under inspiration, Paul applies Hebrews 2:13 to Jesus Christ and to his children, those that partake of flesh and blood (humanity). As we look carefully at the verse, it speaks of the children that Yahweh or the LORD gave Christ. Jesus is the Father of creation, but even this has been given him of the Father.

The lesson for Tuesday, April 8, is entitled “Apparent Contradictions.” This lesson discusses John 3:16 from the King James Version of the Bible which uses the expression “only begotten.” The lesson states:

The problem is, How can the text say Jesus was “begotten” if He was eternal? Did someone beget Him just like the rest of us?

Notice again 1 John 5:1: “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.” Inspiration, however, is silent upon the manner of how Jesus was begotten of the Father. Deuteronomy 29:29 states, “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God.” This is clearly a place where “silence is golden.” God has not told us how he brought forth his Son, and speculation will avail nothing. We can accept, however, the fact that God did bring forth his Son in the ages of eternity past.

The term *only begotten* is from the Greek compound word, *μονογενης* (*monogenes*). The first word, *μονος* (*monos*), means one or only one, and the second word, *γενος* (*genos*), means kindred or offspring. Together they mean only born or “begotten,” as found in the KJV of the Bible. If this is so, why do many new translations fail to use the terms *begotten* or *only born* in John 3:16 and instead use the terms *unique* or *one and only*? At the bottom of the page for April 8 in the *Bible Study Guide*, Adams states:

The weight of scholarly opinion favors the view that *monogenes*, linguistically, does not place emphasis on begetting or begotten but rather on the oneness of a kind, on the idea of uniqueness.

Is this so? *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, edited by Perschbacher, defines *monogenes* as “only-begotten” and “only-born.” People whose first language is Greek have always told me that the term *monogenes* is understood to mean only born, not unique. This issue was discussed

thoroughly in the Greek class I took last year, and our professor, who for many years had held trinitarian views, explained that *monogenes* means “only begotten.”

We need not take another’s word, however, for the meaning of the term *monogenes*, for we can find out what we need right from the Word of God. Let us look at how the term *monogenes* is used in the Bible. This term is used in reference to Jesus five times, always by John (John 1:14; 1:18; 3:16; 3:18; 1 John 4:9). The only other references are three passages in the book of Luke and a passage in Hebrews. I believe that an honest reading of John’s and Luke’s writings, without a preconceived idea, will lead the reader to accept them at face value. The context does not give evidence to the concept of translating *monogenes* as one and only. Since we are looking for a usage to enlighten us on the passages from John, let us examine the three usages from Luke. The first is concerning the widow of Nain’s son:

Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only (*monogenes*) [“only-begotten,” Rothrham, translation] son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her (Luke 7:12).

Contextually it is compelling to define *mongenes* as her only begotten son. If he was a unique son, she might have other sons or daughters to fall back upon in her distress. The fact that her pathos and sorrow is so great is even a stronger reason to define *monogenes* as its structure dictates. There is no indication that *monogenes* means anything other than only born child in Luke 7:12.

The second reference in Luke to *monogenes* is Luke 8:42, concerning Jarius’ daughter: “For he had *one only* (*monogenes*) [“only begotten”—Rothrham translation] daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.” No indication that *monogenes* means anything other than only born child here.

The third usage is Luke 9:38 where a man’s son was possessed with an evil spirit: “And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine *only child* (*monogenes*).” In each of these cases, *monogenes* makes reference to an only born child.

Finally, we shall examine Hebrews 11:17 which trinitarians heavily depend upon. “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten (*monogenes*).” Trinitarians note that Isaac was not Abraham’s only begotten son; he was not even Abraham’s first son. Ishmael was Abraham’s first son and Abraham also had sons by Keturah, but does this invalidate the meaning of *monogenes*? If

we read the next verse, we will see a more complete picture because Paul's thought does not end with verse 17. Reading verses 17 and 18 together in one unit, as they were intended to be read, says:

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, *Of whom it was said*, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called (Hebrews 11:17, 18).

Isaac was Abraham's only born child to whom the promise of the seed was made! *Monogenes* is qualified in these verses to be limited to the son of promise. It is interesting that the very theologians who decry the proof text method in the place of "higher criticism" so conveniently neglect context in this vital verse!

Clearly, the Greek word *monogenes* means only born. Christ is the literal offspring of the Father and this certainly agrees with Proverbs 8, where, speaking under the symbol of Wisdom, Christ declares:

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth [Hebrew: born]; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth [Hebrew: born] (Proverbs 8:22-25).

An English translation from the Septuagint for verse 25 says, "Before the mountains were settled, and before all hills, he begets (γεννα) me." Some have said that this verse cannot be referring to Jesus Christ, but in *The Signs of the Times* August 29, 1900, Ellen White applies this verse to Christ.

As we noted in the section for Lesson 1, Ellen White also noted that Jesus Christ is the Son of God because he was begotten of God.

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,"— *not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father's person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily* (*Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895).

Satan is behind the false view that Jesus is not the Son of God because he does not want you to know, believe, and dwell in God's love. (See 1 John 4:16.) Satan knows that the Bible says that we love God as a result of our understanding and appreciating God's love for us (1 John 4:19). He also knows what 1 John 4:9 says: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we

might live through him.” Satan will do anything he can to keep the truth of God’s great love from us, and he has invented a false understanding of *monogenes* to keep us from comprehending God’s love. If *monogenes* means “unique” or “special,” then the Bible writers did not understand it and neither do the people who speak Greek as their first language understand it as such.

Before leaving John 3:16, we should note that in the teacher’s edition on page 21 we find the following statement: “John 3:16 is an excellent summary of the nature of Christ—He is God’s Son, coexistent and coequal, sent to provide eternal life to all who believe.” Will someone please inform me where in John 3:16 it calls Jesus either “coexistent” or “coequal”? This verse, rather, states that Jesus is the “only begotten Son of God.”

A similar concept is brought out on page 23 of the teacher’s edition, where we read: “To preach the gospel was to preach in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—all Three being coequal and coeternal Persons of the Godhead (*Matt. 28:19*).” Yet again, this is not what the text says. Our space is too limited to dwell upon this verse, but for a detailed understanding of it please request the book *The Foundation of Our Faith*. (See page 37.)

The lesson for Wednesday, April 9 once more addresses the deity of Jesus Christ. Again, Christ being divine is not an issue that we have any burden to argue. The atonement only stands if he is divine; however, there is a great deal of confusion in the *Bible Study Guide* as to what it means for Jesus to be divine or to be God. The lesson states, “In regard to John 1:18, the Greek expression used in the passage calls Jesus, in effect, “the unique God.” This is not what the Greek, however, says. In the King James, we read: “No man hath seen God at any time; the *only begotten Son*, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” The NIV states, “No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.” Why is there a difference?

The issue is not only one of translation but also of the actual text. There are two main sets of texts that the New Testament is translated from. The first set of texts is known as the *Textus Receptus* or the Received Text. The *Textus Receptus* was the Greek New Testament used by the Reformers. The different copies (literally thousands of manuscripts and portions thereof) compared quite closely one to another and the *Textus Receptus* was so well accepted that it became known as the Received Text. It is also called the Majority Text because it was based on the vast majority of texts still in existence.

The second set of texts is composed of two manuscripts: The *Vaticanus* and the *Sinaiticus*. “The *Vaticanus* was placed in the Vatican Library at Rome by

Pope Nicolas V in 1448, its previous history being unknown (Article entitled “Vaticanus Codex,” reference no. 26766 in *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*, softcopy of Online Bible).” It is claimed that the *Vaticanus* manuscript was written in the fourth century, but it has no known history until 1448 when it appeared in the Vatican Library at Rome! The *Sinaiticus* manuscript has a similarly shaky history, being found by Dr. Tischendorf in the convent of St. Catherine in 1859. Its previous history also remains unknown.

The *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* manuscripts differ in thousands of places from the *Textus Receptus*. One notable place they differ is found in John 1:18. The texts are basically the same except for *one* word. John 1:18 in the *Textus Receptus* includes the phrase *monogenes huiois* (μονογενὲς υἱός); whereas, the *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* manuscripts read *monogenes theos* (μονογενὲς θεός).

*Huios* (υἱός) is the Greek word for son. *Theos* (θεός) is the Greek word for God. Thus, the *Textus Receptus* reads *only begotten son* while the *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* manuscripts read *only begotten god*. Trinitarians using the corrupted Catholic manuscripts do not believe that there can be a “begotten God”; therefore, they declare that the word *monogenes* must, instead, mean unique or only one. (For a detailed discussion of this, see the March 2007 issue of *Old Paths*.)

The equality of Jesus with the Father is discussed in Lesson 3 of the *Bible Study Guide*, yet no mention as to how Jesus came to be equal with the Father is offered.

In *The Signs of the Times* article of May 30, 1895, Sister White stated that Christ “was one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection.” Several places in her writings she, as well as the pioneers in their writings, acknowledge Christ to be equal with the Father; however, she states that this equality was one given or conferred upon Christ by the Father and was not an equality that Christ naturally had. Note the following statements:

God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 268, 269).

The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. *The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ, his Son, should be equal with himself*; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own

presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. *His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host.* (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 17, 18).

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. ...*The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father* was represented as an injustice to Lucifer, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 37).

In order for Christ to be exalted as equal with the Father, there must have been a time when he was not in every respect equal with him. This exaltation would not have been possible if Christ had been a coequal, coeternal being with the Father. If Christ was the literal Son of God, however, then the Father would have been able to elevate him. The Ellen G. White compact disc shows that never once did Sister White call Christ either a “created son” or an “adopted son.”

A blasphemous comment under a cloak of Christianity is at the bottom of the lesson for April 10. There we read:

But imagine a situation in which the Being we have come to know as God the Father came to die for us, and the One we have come to know as Jesus stayed back in heaven (we are speaking in human terms to make a point). Nothing would have changed, except that we would have been calling Each by the name we now use for the Other. That is what equality in the Deity means.

Do you understand what this means? The *Bible Study Guide* is saying that God is role-playing with us and that the Father is not really a Father at all and that the Son is not really a Son at all and that the God of truth is not truthful but merely humoring us with language that we are supposed to understand. The Lord Jesus, who declared himself to be the embodiment of truth (John 14:6), is not truthful when he says that he is the “only begotten Son of God.” This view of role-playing has become very popular and is now accepted within Adventism with hardly a whimper.

In the New Testament, Jesus used Father to bring us into a close and personal relationship with God (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe...*, p. 20).

It may be inferred from the Scriptures that when the Godhead laid out the plan of salvation at some point in eternity past, They took certain positions or roles to carry out the provisions of the plan (*The Signs of the Times*, July 1985).

One final point should be made concerning Lesson 2. The teacher's edition, on page 27, quotes a well-known statement by Ellen White from *The Desire of Ages*, page 530: "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived." This seems to suggest that Christ could not have been begotten of the Father, but is this what it means? Just as we are to compare Scripture with Scripture we must compare the Testimonies with the Testimonies. Following the rule that "The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 42; Letter 73, 1903)," we look to an article published one year prior to the publication of *The Desire of Ages*. This article appeared in *The Signs of the Times* and was entitled "Christ the Life-giver." We find in this article a clarification of Sister White's understanding of the concept.

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. "I lay it down of myself" (John 10:18), He said. *In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as his personal Saviour* (*The Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1897). (See also *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 296, 297.)

The significance of this statement is tremendous! While stating that Christ's life was "original, unborrowed, underived," she also stated that "this life is not inherent in man." So far, there is nothing to send up a red flag. The next two sentences open up a whole new perspective: "He [man] can possess it [life, original, unborrowed, underived] only through Christ. He [man] cannot earn it [life, original, unborrowed, underived]; it is given him as a free gift if he [man] will believe in Christ as his personal Saviour."

According to what Sister White wrote a year before *The Desire of Ages* was published, man is offered the same quality of life that Christ has. If Christ could bestow this life as a free gift upon man, then he could have received that same life from his Father. It was the original, unborrowed, underived life of the Father that Christ possessed and is able to bestow upon man. This is what Jesus meant when he said; "For as the Father hath life in himself; *so hath he given* to the Son to have life in himself (John 5:26)."

# *The Wonder of Jesus Lesson 3*

## *The Reality of His Humanity*

Ellen White wrote very elegantly that “when we want a deep problem to study, let us fix our minds on the most marvelous thing that ever took place in earth or heaven—the incarnation of the Son of God (*That I May Know Him*, p. 25).” The goal of Lesson 3 is to discuss the humanity of Jesus. While Jesus must be divine to save us, he must be man to reach us. There are two main points of discussion that we wish to deal with in this section. The first point we will look at is not mentioned in the *Bible Study Guide*: The type of flesh Jesus assumed in the incarnation. The second point addressed in the guide deals with the power Jesus retained during his incarnation.

The importance of understanding and accepting that Jesus came in the flesh is mentioned in the lesson for April 14, where 1 John 4:1-3 is quoted:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

While this text surely applies to the Gnostics of John’s day who denied that Jesus came in flesh, what is its relevance for us today? Do not all professed Christians today believe that Jesus came in the flesh? Even the Papacy claims to believe this and thus claims that she cannot be considered as antichrist. There must be more beneath the surface. For Jesus to have come in the flesh (σάρξ –*sarx*), he must truly experience what we experience in our flesh. Did Jesus have flesh such as *we have*, or flesh such as Adam had *before* his fall. This has been a hotly debated topic within Adventism for the last fifty years. Unlike the history of the papacy with its councils and synods spreading over hundreds of years, fighting over the teachings of men, Adventism quickly came to a unified biblical position on the incarnation.

During the first one hundred years of the Advent Movement, there was great unanimity concerning the nature of Christ in the incarnation. The church taught that Jesus “took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature (*Medical Ministry*, p. 181).” The Bible text that was used most often by early Seventh-day Adventists in the study of the incarnation was Romans

8:3: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Our pioneers understood this to be a literal description of the incarnation of our Saviour. They understood this *likeness* to be more than a veneer coating but, rather, to be the very nature of Christ.

This concept was written into the first statement of Fundamental Principles in 1872, where it was noted that Jesus took the “the nature of the seed of Abraham (Fundamental II).” This was dropped in the 1931 statement and did not appear in the 1980 statement.

Since 1931, the church has taken no official position on the nature of Jesus in the incarnation (sinful or sinless). This neutrality is demonstrated in Lesson 3 of the *Bible Study Guide*.<sup>1</sup>

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: *God was manifest in the flesh* (1 Timothy 3:16).” His name would be “Immanuel”—*God with us*. (See Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23.) When God delivered the Ten Commandments to Israel, he said, “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (Exodus 20:2).” The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was a type of deliverance from sin. Before that emancipation, Christ said to Moses, “*I am come down* to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians (Exodus 3:8).” Christ was not to bring deliverance from a throne in heaven, but Christ would “come down” to where man was to give him freedom.

Like the word *millennium*, the word *incarnation* is not used in the Scriptures. It is derived from two Latin words, *in carnis*, which translate “in flesh” or “in the flesh.” Did Jesus come in the flesh and was it sinful flesh that he partook of? In the epistle to the Hebrews, Paul begins by stating Christ’s likeness to God. This is then followed by Paul setting forth Christ’s likeness to men:

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1. However, since the S.D.A.—Evangelical conferences of 1955 and 1956, the unofficial teaching and that of the seminary favors the pre-fall view of Adam as representing Christ in his humanity. Of interest is a part of the current statement on the “Experience of Salvation.” It reads: “Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example (Statement 10).” So the same way we have faith in Jesus as our Substitute, we have faith in him as our Example.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. *For it became him* [was right and proper—Phillips], for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren (Hebrews 2:9-11).

Paul is telling us that is suitable, right and proper for God to make Christ “perfect through sufferings (Hebrews 2:10).” Paul continues:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:14-16).

Christ partook of the seed of Abraham. Abraham was not immaculate with sinless flesh. Paul continues so as to leave the reader with no doubt that he has a Saviour that comes close to him in his humanity:

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:17, 18).

The word translated *behooved* in the Greek (οφειλο—*opheilo*) means “to be bound to,” “under obligation,” “indebted,” or “owe.” Commenting on this, Elder M. L. Andreasen wrote:

If Christ is to be a merciful and faithful high priest, Paul says it behooves Him “in all things” to be like His brethren. This is obligatory. It is a duty He owes and must not avoid. He cannot make reconciliation for men unless He takes His place with them and in all things becomes like them. It is not a question of choice. He *should*, He *must*, He *ought* to, He is *under obligation* to, He *owes* it. Unless He has to struggle with the same temptations men do, He cannot sympathize with them. One who has never been hungry, who has never been weak and sick, who has never struggled with temptations, is unable fully to sympathize with those who are thus afflicted (*Letters to the Churches*, Series A, no. 1, p. 6; emphasis in original).

We see, therefore, that the Christ of the Scriptures is one that truly understands all of our trials that come from without and from within and knows how to send help in our time of need!

One may ask, “Is not God omniscient? Did God *have* to send his Son to our level to find out what we experience?” Why would Christ have to take “upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succor those that are tempted (*Medical Ministry*, p. 181)?” Firstly, the Bible states that Christ “emptied himself” at the incarnation. (Philippians 2:7, Grk.) In order to die for the sins of man, Christ first had to empty himself and give up his immortality. “But he humbled himself, and took mortality upon him (*The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1887).” Also, he “emptied himself” of his omniscience because the Scripture states that “Jesus increased in wisdom (Luke 2:52).” This could not have been if, in his humanity, he was omniscient.

This truth is vital. Unless we struggle with the same temptations, problems, or trials of those whom we seek to help, we are hampered in understanding their trials. Also, the one in need must know that the sympathizer *can relate by experience* to his or her situation! How difficult it is to help those that look at you with a tear-filled face, saying: “You don’t understand; you’ve never been in my situation!” The sinner who understands that Jesus took upon himself his own sinful nature can gain courage by the fact that his Saviour does know, *by experience*, the trial he is under and that he can relate, *by experience*, to the sinner’s need. Jesus can provide the help we must have when we are tempted because he “condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3).” The Scriptures further state that Jesus was “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” and was “compassed with infirmity (Hebrews 4:15; 5:2).” “The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting (Isaiah 50:5, 6).” He “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses (Matthew 8:17).” God did not exempt Jesus nor did Jesus ask to be exempted. *All* of Christ’s experiences were necessary if he is to help his brethren. Thus the Scriptures state: “Wherefore in *all things* it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren (Hebrews 2:17).” Christ, the Son of the eternal God, became Jesus, the Son of man, that we might become the “sons of God (1 John 3:1).” Christ became man, so that he might redeem man. Jesus was *made* what *man* is:

“Man ... is flesh. (Genesis 6:3).” The Bible says “the Word was *made* flesh (John 1:14).”

Man is “under the law (Romans 3:19).” ”God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, *made* under the law (Galatians 4:4).”

Man is “under the curse (Galatians 3:10).” “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, *being made* a curse for us (Galatians 3:13).”

Man is “sold under sin (Romans 7:14).” “... and the LORD hath *laid on him* the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6).”

Man is a “body of sin (Romans 6:6).” Christ has been *made* “sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).”

We see that “in *all things* it behoved him to be made *like* unto his brethren (Hebrews 2:17).” A. T. Jones noted:

Yet it must never be forgotten, it must be borne in mind and heart constantly and forever, that in none of this as to man, the flesh, sin, and the curse was Christ ever *of Himself* or of His own original nature or fault. All this He “*was made.*” “He *took upon Him* the form of a servant, and *was made* in the likeness of men [Philippians 2:7].”

And in all this Christ was “*made*” what, before, He *was not* in order that *the man* might be made *now* and *forever* what he is *not* (*The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, p. 47; emphasis in the original).

Luke, a physician, records the words of Gabriel to Mary: “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35).” Furthermore, John writes: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:1, 2, 14).” The one who was with the Father from the beginning, “emptied himself” and became flesh, flesh such as Mary had. Jesus was not, however, degraded by this assumption of flesh, for, as Luke records, he was “that holy thing (Luke 1:35).”

The mind of Jesus Christ which we are commanded to have (Philippians 2:5) was always pure and never once sinned in thought, word, or deed. He always maintained his integrity of character. Peter says, “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth (1 Peter 2:22).”

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman (Galatians 4:4).” Christ must be born of a woman, for being made of a man would not bring him close enough to mankind to be the complete Saviour. Christ must come all the way down to us or he fails to

reach us. In Jacob's vision, the ladder reached all the way from heaven to earth. It did not stop one or two rungs short. That ladder represented Christ. (See Genesis 28:12-17.)

What power did Christ possess in the incarnation? It is a common belief that when Jesus became incarnate he retained the mighty powers of divinity—specifically, his omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and immortality. Adams states in the lesson for April 15:

While on earth, Jesus voluntarily surrendered the *independent* exercise of the Divine attributes. He *surrendered*; He did not relinquish. The attributes remained in Him. He could have used them at any time for His own advantage, but He did not. The temptation to call on these attributes to extricate Himself from difficulty (in ways not open to us) was a major ingredient of His daily trials.

Adams declares that the temptation to use divine power “was a major ingredient of His daily trials,” but we are told this in the Word of God nor in the Testimonies. Let us see what they teach on this subject.

The Apostle Paul, under inspiration, wrote concerning Christ: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:6, 7).” The original Greek in the first part of verse 7 is *αλλ εαυτον εκενωσεν* (*all eauton ekenosen*) which literally translates to “but himself emptied.” Paul says that the one who was divine, the one “in the form of God,” “emptied” himself of that divine form. In other words, Christ emptied himself in the incarnation of the divine attributes that created his form of divinity and accepted the essential attributes of a slave.

Jesus laid aside his omnipotence. “The faithful and true witness” stated very clearly: “Verily, verily [truly, truly], I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. . . . I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me (John 5:19, 30).” Writing concerning the calming of the storm when Jesus and the disciples were on the sea of Galilee, Ellen White wrote:

When Jesus was awakened to meet the storm, He was in perfect peace. There was no trace of fear in word or look, for no fear was in His heart. But ***He rested not in the possession of almighty power.*** It was not as the “Master of earth and sea and sky” that He reposed in quiet. ***That power He had laid down,*** and He says, “I can of Mine own self do nothing.”

John 5:30. He trusted in the Father's might. It was in faith--faith in God's love and care--that Jesus rested, and the power of that word which stilled the storm was the power of God (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 336).

Ellen White does not say that Jesus "did not relinquish" his "divine attributes" nor does she say that he surrendered them in the sense of keeping them but choosing not to use them. Christ did not retain his omnipotence in the incarnation; instead, he totally depended on the Father. She says that he was not in "possession of almighty power." It had been "laid down."

Christ laid aside his omnipresence and accepted the physical restrictions of humanity. (See John 11:11-44.) This is one reason that Jesus told the disciples that it was "expedient" for him to go away so that the omnipresent Comforter could come.

Christ laid aside his omniscience in the incarnation. Luke 2:52 states that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." One cannot increase in wisdom if he already possesses it all. In fact, Jesus plainly told the disciples that he did not even know the exact time of the second coming. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father (Mark 13:32)."

Finally, Christ laid aside his immortality in the incarnation. The Scriptures teach that the soul of Christ died, that he gave up the "breath of life" at Calvary.

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because *he hath poured out his soul unto death*: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isaiah 53:12).

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost (Matthew 27:50).

But he humbled himself, and took mortality upon him (*The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1887).

The one aspect of divinity that Jesus did not lay down is actually the most vital issue of his divinity: his pure nature of love. We are never told that God is omnipotence or that God is immortality, but we are told that "God is love (1 John 4:8, 16)." This pure nature of love is the aspect of divinity that humanity may grasp and be a partaker of (2 Peter 1:4).

Christ, in the incarnation, laid aside the four physical divine attributes while retaining his divine relationship with his Father, along with his pure mind of divine love. In other words, he was divine because of who he was and his character of love and not because of having power in the physical sense.

So, we ask then, “How did Jesus perform the miracles that were attributed to him?” The answer is that he performed them by the same manner his followers will perform miracles: By the power of the Spirit of God and the ministry of the angels working beside them. The inspired record says, “And Jesus returned *in the power of the Spirit* into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about (Luke 4:14). When in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus read from Isaiah 61:2:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18, 19).

Jesus himself said “I cast out devils by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28).” So we see that the Spirit of God was working with Christ. Ellen White added a complementary thought to this when she wrote:

All the miracles of Christ performed for the afflicted and suffering were, by the power of God, through the ministration of angels (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 67).

So, clearly, Jesus did not have power that is beyond our reach to have, for he said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father (John 14:12).” Jesus had no advantage that is not available to us in our battle with sin. When we are born again, we receive the Spirit of Christ into our lives, and we are fully enabled to have a victorious life. The same victory that Jesus obtained in sinful flesh two thousand years ago is repeated in the believer: “Christ in you the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).”

[Jesus] came to live a life of obedience to its [the law’s] requirements and thus prove the falsity of the charge made by Satan that it is impossible for man to keep the law of God. As a man He met temptation and overcame in the strength given Him from God (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 207, 208).

If Jesus had an advantage in the conquest of sin that is not available to us, then Satan’s charge would have been true. Furthermore, if Jesus is to come and make the demonstration of what man can do by the power of God, then Jesus must work in a manner that is totally above board and in the clear. If Jesus came with divine power but chose not use it, how could it be reasonably demonstrated to us so that we would know he did not use his divine power? What guarantee do we have that it was not used?

Imagine I have a car with both a gasoline engine and a rocket engine, and I offer to race any car with a gasoline engine, promising not to use the rocket engine. And suppose I win every race by great margins, though I never used the rocket engine. What will most people think? They will wonder, "Did he really run fair? How can we know that he never used the rocket engine?" The only way that I can positively demonstrate to everyone that no rocket engine was used would be to take it out and not have it available. By coming stripped of his divine powers, Jesus answers Satan's charges that he had an unfair advantage over us in our battle with sin.

*All power, all wisdom, are at our command. We have only to ask (Ministry of Healing, p. 514).*

*He withstood the temptation, through the power that man may command. He laid hold on the throne of God, and there is not a man or woman who may not have access to the same help through faith in God. Man may become a partaker of the divine nature; not a soul lives who may not summon the aid of Heaven in temptation and trial. Christ came to reveal the source of His power, that man might never rely on his unaided human capabilities (Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 408).*

*If Christ had a special power which it is not the privilege of a man to have, Satan would have made capital of this matter. ... To attribute to his nature a power that it is not possible for man to have in his conflicts with Satan, is to destroy the completeness of his humanity. The obedience of Christ to his Father was the same obedience that is required of man. Man cannot overcome Satan's temptations except as divine power works through humanity. The Lord Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what God in his own divine person could do, but what he could do through humanity. Through faith man is to be a partaker of the divine nature, and to overcome every temptation wherewith he is beset (The Signs of the Times, April 10, 1893).*

Beloved, Jesus comes close, even beside you. He is a brother that not only understands your need but can help in your time of need. Because he came to the bottom, he understands what it is like and help you all the way from the bottom of the ladder on earth to the top of the ladder in heaven.

We end this section as, *The Bible Study Guide* for week three did, with this pensive thought from Ellen White.

Divinity and humanity were mysteriously combined, and man and God became one. It is in this union that we find the hope of our fallen race (*The Signs of the Times*, July 30, 1896).

# *The Wonder of Jesus Lesson 4*

## *The Wisdom of His Teachings*

Lesson 4 of the *Bible Study Guide* deals with the wisdom of Christ's teachings. The main sections deal with: The Sermon on the Mount, what Jesus taught about God, forgiveness, humility, and grace and faith. Some of this lesson is not objectionable and some is even commendable; however, there are a few points that should be considered.

Concerning what Jesus taught about God we are reminded of the following statements from the pen of inspiration:

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal tenderness and abundant grace of God; He dwelt much upon the holiness of His character and His law (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 40).

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ's own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 55).

Christ's most favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God (Special Testimonies, Series A, no. 3, p. 19).

The theme of God's love was Ellen White's favorite theme as well (*The Review and Herald*, June 6, 1893).

The lesson for April 23 presents confusion on the issue of the identity of the Supreme Being. In this lesson, Jesus is there called "*the God of the universe* (emphasis in original)." This is an expression, however, that is not found in inspiration with reference to Jesus, but inspiration does use it in reference to the Father. "The God of the universe has given our cases in the Judgment into the hands of his Son (*Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, January 15, 1889)." "The great God of the universe, ... 'so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son' (*The Signs of the Times*, January 6, 1888)."

The lesson for April 24 has a statement that should be noted. In the first paragraph we read:

But to ask that question [if Jesus believed in righteousness by faith] is to grossly misunderstand both Paul and Jesus. Jesus' approach to teaching about grace seemed at times to go in a different direction; one reason, incidentally, that we should not be too legalistic with one another

over the exact formulas we each use to describe God's marvelous act of grace in Jesus and our response to it.

While some may *seem* to feel that Jesus taught differently than Paul, we know that he did not. There is not a multiple number of gospels and while it is true that we must be kind to others in our dealing with them, should not God's people know the truth on the vital issue of righteousness? Did not Jesus say, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32)." The "believe as you wish; I will not be dogmatic about anything" thinking does not match the Word of God. I wonder how I would feel to reach heaven believing as I wished and then meet martyrs who had died rather than deviate from the truth in the slightest amount.

The lesson for April 25 has another statement that on the surface seems fine but consciously or subconsciously leaves doubt about the life of Christ. This statement, quoted from Huston Smith's *The Illustrated World's Religions*, says:

The most impressive thing about the teachings of Jesus is not that he taught them but that he *appears* to have lived them.

Are we to believe that Christ may not have lived his teachings?! The above statement is not a positive affirmation of Christ's life but rather one that casts a shadow of doubt upon him. "He appears to have lived them" implies that maybe it only appears he lived them but in reality did not. How this statement got past the screening committees I cannot guess. May God help his people if this is the limit of their spiritual discernment.

# *The Wonder of Jesus Lesson 5*

## *The Wonder of His Works*

An important point that may be discussed in class for this week's lesson will be the source of the power for the works of Jesus. We have covered this in section for Lesson 3.

On page 55 of the teacher's edition is a comment that may come up in the lesson, and it illustrates a point that should be considered. According to this statement: "The works of Jesus were evidence that He was truly the Messiah." Rather than the testimony of Scripture, works are to be the basis of deciding the identity of the Messiah, yet Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father (John 14:12). If the disciples are to do greater works, how can works be the test? Jesus raised the dead. So did Peter (Acts 9:40) and the touching the bones of Elisha brought a dead man back to life (2 Kings 13:21)! We would be well to remember the prophecy of Ellen White concerning Satan:

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. . . . Satan will manifest himself among men as a *majestic being of dazzling brightness*, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: "Christ has come! Christ has come!" The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; *he heals the diseases of the people*, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion (*The Great Controversy*, p. 624).

If we go by the outward appearance, that which we see, we will be deceived. This was the failure of Eve. The Bible says that "when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was *pleasant to the eyes*, and

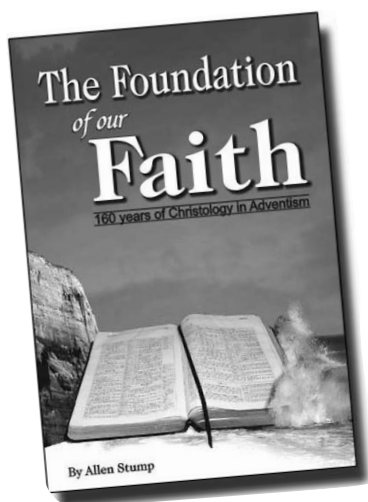
a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat (Genesis 3:6).” Eve based her decision upon that which she saw. The Bible states that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).” Paul further states that we “we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).”

Finally, in this installment, we would like to note what heaven declares is the greatest work or miracle that is done by God. It is not feeding five thousand people, nor healing the blind, nor even raising the dead. The greatest miracle is the conversion of a sinner into a saint. “The conversion of the human soul is of no little consequence. It is the greatest miracle performed by divine power (*Evangelism*, pp. 280, 281).



## The Foundation of Our Faith

This volume explores the roots of Seventh-day Adventism from the Christian Connection and the Millerite movement to our present time. Believing that the voice of Ellen G. White presents an inspired history of the Advent Movement, this book explores Adventist Christology of the last 160 years and demonstrates the harmony between the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, and the writings of the Advent pioneers concerning the doctrine of God. This book contains over 250 pages of vital information. It has a descriptive table of contents and a complete Scripture index. The suggested donation is usually \$7.50, but we are suggesting a donation of only \$4.00 if you note that you are responding to the offer in the Sabbath School Lesson Comments Booklet.



# Other Helpful Materials

What did Ellen White mean when she wrote that “the Father and the Son alone are to be exalted (*YI*, July 7, 1898)”?” This DVD discusses the history of Ellen G. White and documents her understanding about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This presentation contains scores of statements from Ellen White on the issue of God and answers to the common questions that arise concerning what some people believe to be conflicting statements from her pen on this vital doctrine. The suggested donation is \$6.00, but we are suggesting a donation of only \$4.00 from those who receive this study guide if you note that you are responding to the offer in the Sabbath School Lesson Comments Booklet.



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