

The Wonder of Jesus ***The Mystery of His Deity***

Lesson #2 for April 12, 2008

Scriptures: Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; Matthew 16:13-17; John 1:1,14,18; 8:58; 17:5; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 13:14.

1. This lesson discusses the deity of Christ. What are the essential characteristics of deity? Could one set up a test—or multiple tests—to distinguish divinity from humanity? Why did a number of the early Adventist pioneers not believe in the preexistence of Christ?
2. Sometimes we try to summarize His divinity by talking about: 1) His omniscience, 2) His omnipresence, and 3) His omnipotence. We imply that He knows everything, is everywhere, and can do anything. Is it even possible for human beings to comprehend that?

The Attributes of God

Non-communicable	Communicable
Immortality (Eternity) (Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalms 102:27; 1 Timothy 6:16; 2 Peter 3:8; Revelation 22:13)	Intellectual Attributes
Immensity (Omnipresence) (Jer 23:23,24; Is 66:1; Acts 17:24; Ps 139:6-12; Mt 28:20; 1 Cor 6:19)	Knowledge (Omniscience) (1 John 3:20; Psalms 139:1-5; Psalms 94:11; Colossians 2:3)
Immutability (Changeless, Constant) (James 1:17; Hebrews 6:17; 1 Samuel 15:29; Malachi 3:6)	Veracity (2 Timothy 2:13; 1 John 1:5; John 14:6)
Independence (Self-existence) (Exodus 3:4; John 5:26; Acts 17:25)	Wisdom (Genesis 50:20; Job 28:28; Psalms 104:24; 111:10; Proverbs 9:10)
Spirituality (Invisible) (Exodus 20:4; 33:20; 1 Timothy 6:16)	Moral Attributes (Goodness) (Psalms 18:19; 145:9; Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19)
Unity (Monotheism) (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29; John 17:3)	Holiness (Psalms 78:41; 89:18; 99:3,9; 111:9; Isaiah 12:6; Jeremiah 51:5; Revelation 15:4)
	Love (Exodus 34:6,7; 1 John 4:8,16)
	Volitional Attributes
	Omnipotence (Creator) (Gen. 18:14; Jer 32:27; Matt. 19:26; Heb 1:3)
	Sovereignty (Matt. 28:18; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16)

Adapted from Baker's Encyclopedia of the Bible

3. What are the hardest aspects of deity or divinity to comprehend? Some suggestions: 1) Having no beginning! 3) Life-giving. 4) Seeing the future without "predestining" the future.

4. What difference did the divinity of Christ make in His human life? Did He exercise His divine power at any point on His own behalf? If so, when? If not, why not? Or did He always depend on the Holy Spirit or the Father to exercise Their divinity to perform miracles, etc.?

5. What is implied by the following statement by Ellen G. White?

“Verily, verily, I say unto you,” Christ continued, “He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also.”... **Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him.** His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was. {DA 664.4}

6. In what ways was Jesus like us? In what ways was He different? We sometimes suggest that Jesus was very different than we are because He preexisted. But let us remember that the Greek idea of the soul was that every soul preexisted! But Jesus was “the visible likeness of the invisible God,” (Colossians 1:15) and “Through him God made all things.” (John 1:3, *GNB*) “In the beginning the Word already existed.” (John 1:1, *GNB*) Christ was entirely unique.

7. Is there any way for us to evaluate these claims of preexistence? Or must they be accepted on “raw, naked faith”? Read Luke 19:10; John 3:13; 8:23,24,28; 8:58,59; 13:19; 17:5,8,24; 18:5. There can be no denying the fact that Jesus claimed preexistence. John 5:39 and Luke 18:31; 22:37; 24:44 support those claims.

8. Another perplexing question then arises. To what extent was Jesus aware of His divinity and His preexistence? Could He remember any of the things that He had done in the past? Or did He have to learn them from His “mother’s knee”?

The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. **From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother’s knee.** As He advanced from childhood to youth, He did not seek the schools of the rabbis. He needed not the education to be obtained from such sources; for God was His instructor. {DA 70 (1898)}

9. A black southern preacher was talking about Jesus’ visit to the temple at the age of 12. The preacher imagined that at some point, the temple teachers must have asked Jesus how old He was. In His own words Jesus might have said, “On my mother’s side, I’m 12; but on my Father’s side, I’m older than time!”

10. What would have happened to His deity if Jesus had failed His earthly mission?

11. Read Hebrews 1:1-4 and Colossians 1:15-20. What difference does it make in the great controversy or even in our personal salvation to know that Jesus is superior to the angels—even Lucifer? That He is the exact likeness of God? That He sustains the universe? How does God “bring back” the whole universe to Himself through Christ’s death on the cross? How does Christ’s death make peace?

12. Read Isaiah 9:6. Why was Jesus given all those names? It seems like the members of the Trinity share names back and forth. Is that confusing? Why did they do that?

13. Five times in the writings of John, he refers to Jesus as the *monogenes* Son. (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; and 1 John 4:9) Often the *monogenes* is translated as “only-begotten.” What is the correct meaning of that Greek word? Read Luke 7:11-15; 8:41,42; 9:38. Clearly, each of those individuals was the “only,” or “unique,” son or daughter of their parents. The point was the “unique” qualities of the individual and not his/her being “begotten.”

14. The Jewish nation has quoted Deuteronomy 6:4 almost as their national pledge. Jews could hardly be more monotheistic. So what did it take to convince the Bible writers to refer to Jesus Christ as God? Look at Matthew 3:3; John 1:1,18; 20:28. There is only one possible explanation for these and other similar passages—the disciples had become fully convinced that Jesus was fully and completely

God and that He could resurrect and save them.

15. Read John 14:9. What was implied when the human Jesus said, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father”? (GNB)
16. Read John 10:30; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Revelation 20:6; Revelation 22:3. All of these passages suggest that Jesus is equal to God and will rule on a throne forever with His people and with God. John 10:30 implies that Jesus and God are of the same essential nature and substance.
17. Look at what Ellen White said about that idea.

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, humbling Himself, veiling His glory, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed....In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. *Letter 83*, 1895; *That I May Know Him* 338; *21MR* 393.1

18. What does it mean to you to know that Jesus was fully God before being born here as a baby boy? Do you believe that Jesus was the God of the Old Testament? (1 Corinthians 10:1-4) Are you comfortable with Jesus being “the God of Mount Sinai”? The One who sent the flood? The One who killed 185,000 Assyrians? The One who sent the plagues on Egypt? Why do you think that His behavior in the Gospels was so different? If He had performed a few Old-Testament-style miracles in New Testament times, the whole nation would have followed after Him! Why didn't He use His divinity, if, in fact, He had it, to convince people of His divinity?
19. What questions do you have about the virgin birth?

If men reject the testimony of the inspired Scriptures concerning the deity of Christ, it is in vain to argue the point with them; for no argument, however conclusive, could convince them. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14. None who hold this error can have a true conception of the character or the mission of Christ, or of the great plan of God for man's redemption. {GC 524.2}

20. If you did not believe in the preexistence of Christ, what difference would that make in your understanding of the plan of salvation?
21. **If you had a friend that suddenly began claiming that he was God, what would you do? What if he suddenly changed into the likeness of an angel? What if he could move through walls or even perform miracles? Could you apply some of the ideas that we have discussed to be certain whether or not that person was telling you the truth?**
22. **One day soon, the Devil will appear—looking and sounding like Jesus—claiming that he is the Messiah come back to earth. What criteria will you use to determine if he is telling the truth? If he is divine as he claims?**

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