

The Teachings of Jesus

The Son

Lesson #2 for July 12, 2014

Scriptures: Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 11:27; 20:28; 24:30; Luke 5:17-26; John 8:24,28,58; 13:19.

1. This lesson is about the humanity and the divinity of Jesus Christ. What did He say and imply about Himself? Surrounded by pagan temples and pagan images at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus turned to His disciples and asked, "Who do you say that I am?" Apparently, Peter was the one who was bold enough to answer. But, did he really understand what he was saying? The question comes to every one of us. Each one of us will be saved or lost based on our own personal beliefs and convictions. Do we believe and do we have sufficient evidence to agree with Peter's statement: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"? (See Matthew 16:13-20.)
2. Jesus used the term *the Son of Man* to refer to Himself more than 80 times in the four Gospels. Other people never called Him by that name. So, why do you think He used that term so frequently? That expression is used quite frequently in the Old Testament (See especially the book of Ezekiel. See also Genesis 6:2,4 and *PP* 81.2.) where in Hebrew the expression basically means a "human being." But, only once in the many references in the Old Testament does it refer to Someone who was not an ordinary human, namely, the Messiah. (Daniel 7:13-14)

Scripture presents Jesus as a true human being. He was born as a baby, grew up as a child (increasing in wisdom and in stature [*Luke 2:40, 52*]), and had sisters and brothers (*Matt. 13:55, 56*). He ate (*Matt. 9:11*), slept (*Luke 8:23*), was tired (*John 4:6*), and suffered hunger and thirst (*Matt. 4:2, John 19:28*). He also experienced sorrow and distress (*Matt. 26:37*).

To the casual observer, Jesus seemed to be a common man who walked among the people as one of the multitude. Many of His contemporaries did not recognize in Him anything more than a man (*John 7:46*). People treated Him as one of them; they laughed at Him (*Luke 8:53*), criticized Him (*Matt. 11:19*), even mocked and beat Him (*Luke 22:63*). To them, He was just another human being. – *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, for Sunday, July 6.

3. To the ordinary people in Palestine, Jesus looked, sounded, walked, and talked essentially like every other Jew. But, when He referred to Himself as "the Son of Man," He knew that some of them would recognize that title as coming from Daniel 7:13-14. To whom does that refer?
4. Read Matthew 24:30; 25:31; 26:64. In these verses talking about the second coming, there are several similarities to Daniel 7:13-14. Jesus predicted: 1) That He will be seen coming in the clouds, 2) That He will be seated at God's right hand, and 3) That He will be surrounded by many angels.
5. Turning now to the major questions of our lesson, why is it important for us to recognize that Jesus was truly human? Satan had claimed that it was impossible for any truly human being to live a perfect, sinless life here on this earth.

When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. **It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven.** Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. (*The Desire*

of Ages 761.4) [Bold type is added.]

6. The perfect, sinless life of Jesus proved that Satan was wrong.
7. At times, Jesus was also called “the Son of God.” When speaking to Mary, Gabriel called the future Jesus, the Son of God. (Luke 1:35) Notice some of the other times when He was called the Son of God. (Matthew 14:33; Mark 15:39; John 1:49; 11:27) While Jesus recognized that He was indeed the Son of God, He did not use that title for Himself. He was recognized by God as His Son both at His baptism (Matthew 3:17) and at the transfiguration. (Matthew 17:5)
8. The relationship between Jesus as the Son of God and His Father was/is totally unique. While the two of Them cooperate with the Holy Spirit, no other being in the universe can share that relationship. Satan tried and failed. While God welcomes us to become members of His immediate family, the relationship is different. Jesus was, is, and always will be God. (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-16; Hebrews 1:1-3)
9. Even while Jesus was in His full humanity while He was here on this earth, He recognized that He was in perfect unity with His Father in heaven. (Matthew 11:27; John 3:35; 5:17; 10:30) This was certainly emphasized in His prayer recorded in John 17.
10. During His time here on this earth, Jesus voluntarily set aside His divinity. He had access to it at all times; but, He never used it until resurrection morning. (John 10:18; DA 785.2) He voluntarily subordinated Himself to the Father. (Philippians 2:6-8) While we do not have a specific statement to this effect, it seems very likely that during His sometimes lengthy nighttime prayers to His Father, (See Luke 6:12. Compare Luke 5:15-16; Mark 1:35.) They were planning every day’s activities in full cooperation with Each Other.
11. So, why is it important that Jesus was divine? If Jesus was something less than divine, He could never be our Savior. Did Jesus ever claim to be divine while He was here on this earth? Contrary to what our *Bible Study Guide* says in the section for Tuesday, He did, in fact, claim to be God in the flesh. See John 8:24,28,56-58. He also claimed to be the Messiah when speaking to the woman at the well of Sychar. (John 4:25-26) It is interesting to note that the woman was excited about it and ran to tell her fellow countrymen. The Jewish leaders took up stones to kill Him when He claimed to be God. (John 8:58-59)
12. Why was it so hard for Jesus to explain His true relationship with His Father and the fact that He was the Messiah? It was because, unfortunately, their preconceived wishes about what the Messiah would do were totally contradicted by His life and ministry. (John 7:25-31) They were unwilling to accept the truth. There were several times, for example in John 5:18, when His statements clearly implied that He was claiming to be equal with God the Father.
13. Perhaps the clearest and most delightful and detailed proof of Jesus’s claim to be God is found in Luke 5:17-26. When the paralytic man was lowered through the ceiling, Jesus said to him: “Your sins are forgiven, my friend.” (Luke 5:20, *GNB*) To their way of thinking, this man was paralyzed because of his sins. And they believed that it would be impossible for him to be healed without first dealing with his sins, and only God can do that. So, Jesus commanded the paralyzed man: “I tell you, get up, pick up your bed, and go home!” (Luke 5:24, *GNB*) And he did!

It required nothing less than creative power to restore health to that decaying body. The same voice that spoke life to man created from the dust of the earth had spoken life to the dying paralytic.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 269.5-270.0.
14. Only Jesus rightly claimed the divine prerogative to forgive sins. At His trial, He stated that He would sit in judgment on the entire world. (Matthew 25:31)
15. Consider some other claims that Jesus made suggesting that He was equal with God. He

claimed the power to give life to whom He would. (John 5:21) He said, "I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25) He claimed to have preexistence, and, in fact, that He came down from heaven. (John 3:13) He also claimed to have been sent by the Father Himself. (John 5:23)

16. But Jesus's most profound statements about His divinity were made before the Sanhedrin itself as recorded in John 8:24,28,58. He was directly referring to Exodus 3:13-15.
17. Jesus also, without showing any disapproval, accepted worship from others. He Himself had stated that it was wrong to worship anyone other than God. (Matthew 4:10) Thus, He was, in fact, admitting His divinity when He accepted worship: 1) From the disciples on the sea (Matthew 14:33); 2) From the blind man that had been healed (John 9:38); 3) From the women at His tomb (Matthew 28:9); and 4) From His disciples in Galilee (Matthew 28:17). Thomas gave direct testimony to that when he said, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28, *GNB*)
18. Having now pointed out many of the claims made by or about Jesus, we are ready to talk about why He came and what He intended to accomplish. Satan had made many false claims against God. Furthermore, he had made many accusations against God and told lies about God. The life and death of Jesus clearly and unequivocally refuted all of Satan's lies, claims, and accusations. The most important thing Jesus did and the reason why He came to this earth was to reveal the truth about His Father and, thus, about Himself as well. See #14 in last week's lesson where this was spelled out by Ellen White.
19. Jesus had come to this earth to refute all of Satan's claims and accusations and, thus, make it possible to restore humanity to its pre-fall condition. He reestablished our relationship with the Father (John 1:51); He proved His ability to forgive sins (Matthew 26:28); He gave a perfect example of how we should live (1 Peter 2:21; John 15:34-35); and, thus, He can offer us eternal life (John 3:16).
20. How do you understand the following statements? Do you agree?

Why did Jesus have to die? It was because He voluntarily took our place and bore the punishment of our sin. We are all sinners (Rom. 3:10-12) and, as such, deserve eternal death (Rom. 6:23). The price for our salvation was so high that only the life of the Son of God was enough to pay for it. Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide for July 10. [Bold type and italics (except for the Bible references) are added.]

The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner. In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, satisfy its claims. Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression. None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63.

21. For those who are still afraid of God and want a legal basis for their salvation, these statements are appropriate. Look at the story of Luther. As a trained lawyer, he spent his life trying to find a legal solution to his sinful condition. But, for those who have grown in their spiritual experience, there is more.
22. Ellen White gave us some very clear statements about Christ's divinity.

While God's Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding His pre-existence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. . . . The world was made by Him, "and without him was not any thing

made that was made” (John 1:3). If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father.—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 247.

In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. “He that hath the Son hath life.” 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 530.

23. It is very interesting to note that demons repeatedly confessed that Jesus was exactly the Person we know He was. (See Mark 1:24; **Mark 3:11**; 5:6-8; compare James 2:19.)
24. So, in summary, we can say that Jesus had to be fully human: 1) To answer Satan’s accusations, and 2) To be a perfect Example for us. Furthermore, He had to be fully divine in order: 1) To be our Savior, 2) To be our Creator, and 3) To be that very important Bridgbuilder between God and humanity.
25. At what point during His human life do you think Jesus recognized His divinity? Was it when He was in the temple at age 12? (Luke 2:41-50) Was it earlier?(Luke 2:49)
26. The fact that Jesus was fully human and at the same time fully divine has baffled scholars and theologians down through the generations. Major conferences and councils were held by the early Christian church over this question. It is very important that we not lose our balance when talking about this very important subject. An early Christian presbyter from Alexandria in Egypt by the name of Arius who lived approximately 250-336 A.D. believed that God the Father was the only true God and, thus, that God subordinated Jesus Christ to Himself. Unitarian Universalists and Jehovah’s Witnesses still follow those beliefs. They reject the Trinitarian understanding of God. Arius followed the ideas of Lucian of Antioch who in turn followed the adoptionist philosophy of Paul of Samosata who believed that Christ was actually a very good human being who was adopted by God into His Family.
27. The Docetists were a popular group between the 2nd and 4th centuries A.D. They believed that Jesus never became fully human; they believed that He just seemed to be human. *Dokein* is a Greek word meaning “to seem.” They believed that it would be impossible for God to fully become a human being because all real matter is evil. Their paradigm prevented them from believing Scripture. This is why some believe in the “immaculate conception” of Mary, the mother of Jesus. According to that view, Mary had to be perfect, or Jesus could not have entered her womb.
28. Another early Christian by the name of Marcion had a dualistic philosophy. He believed that Christ simply possessed a “phantom body.”
29. As Bible-believing Christians, we must reject all of those false ideas. The Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus was fully human and fully divine. Although we may not be able to explain that philosophically or scientifically, nevertheless, it is true. We should not find it surprising that God is able to do some things that we do not fully understand!
30. Is it clear in your mind why it is essential for Christ to have been fully God? Is it clear in your mind why it is essential for Christ to have been fully human? Even though we may not be able to fully explain it, do we have adequate evidence for believing it? What do you think?

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