

# **Christian Education**

## **Jesus as the Master Teacher**

Lesson #5 for October 31, 2020

Scriptures: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; 5:16-21; John 1:14,18; 14:1-14; Philippians 2:1-2.

1. Billy Graham tells the story of when he visited soldiers at a field hospital in the company of their general. One young soldier “was so mangled that he lay facedown on a canvas-and-steel contraption.” A doctor whispered to Graham, “I doubt he’ll ever walk again.” The soldier made a request of the general: “Sir, . . . I fought for you, but I’ve never seen you. Could I see your face?” So the general got down, slid under that canvas-and-steel contraption, and talked with the soldier. As Graham watched, a tear fell from the soldier onto the general’s cheek.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath, October 24.
2. If you take time to read the first few pages of the incredible book, *The Desire of Ages* by Ellen White, you will realize that the condition of mankind just before the birth of Jesus was very bad. So, what did God do? He sent His baby Son, Jesus Christ, into a world that the Devil thought he had just about gotten under his complete control. And it was God’s plan that we should behold the face of Jesus Christ.
3. Look at the following verses.

**Hebrews 1:1-4:** In the past, God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one through whom God created the universe, the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end. <sup>3</sup>He reflects the brightness of God’s glory and is the exact likeness of God’s own being, sustaining the universe with his powerful word. After achieving forgiveness for human sins, he sat down in heaven at the right-hand side of God, the Supreme Power.

<sup>4</sup> The Son was made greater than the angels, just as the name that God gave him is greater than theirs.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Hebrews 1:1-4). New York: American Bible Society.

4. These verses make it very clear that Jesus Christ was not born as just an ordinary human being. The Creator of the universe, the King of all kings, the Ruler of angels, chose to become a helpless baby boy on this earth. Why would He do that? He had one great purpose: To teach us the truth about His Father!
5. As sinful human beings, we could not behold the face of God without being destroyed. But, God chose to solve the problem by sending Jesus as “the express image of His person” (Hebrews 1:3, *NKJV\**) or “the exact imprint of God’s very being.” (Hebrews 1:3, *NRSV\**)
6. So, if we want to know what God is like, we must intensely study the example of Jesus.

**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.—Ellen G. White, *That I May Know Him\** 338.4.<sup>†</sup> Compare Letter

83, 1895, in *21MR* 393.1.

**By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels....** Not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. **Our little world is the lesson book of the universe.** God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," [1 Peter 1:12] and **it will be their study throughout endless ages.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 19.2 (1898).<sup>†</sup> Compare *Reflecting Christ* 15.4 (1985); *AG* 45.3; *LDE* 31.1; *OFC* 200.3.

Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of [11] Him as severe and unforgiving. **Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.**—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*\* 10.3-11.0 (1892).<sup>†</sup> Compare *1MCP* 250.1.

7. So, what were we as human beings supposed to learn from the life and death of Jesus? Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-6. In these verses Paul made it very clear that Christ was the exact likeness of God. Compare John 14:9.
8. We do not know exactly how Paul studied the life of Christ. Following his experience on the Damascus road, he went out into the Arabian desert and spent years thinking through the issues. He probably had memorized much of the Old Testament in Hebrew. The New Testament had not yet been written. But, a short time later, ministering to the converts in Corinth, he wrote:  
**1 Corinthians 11:1:** Imitate me, then, just as I imitate Christ.—*Good News Bible*.\*
9. Could it be possible for someone in our day to make such a statement?
10. On several occasions, God has used light to dispel darkness. With the birth of Jesus, He chose to send His Son to accurately reflect the light of His own image. And incredible as it may seem, He has asked us to "be imitators of God as dear children." (Ephesians 5:1, *NKJV*\*) So, what does that mean?

It is growth in knowledge of the character of Christ that sanctifies the soul. To discern and appreciate the wonderful work of the atonement, transforms him who contemplates the plan of salvation. **By beholding Christ, he becomes changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. [2 Corinthians 3:18] The beholding of Jesus becomes an ennobling, refining process to the actual Christian. He sees the Pattern, and grows into its likeness, and then how easily are dissensions, emulations, and strife adjusted. The perfection of Christ's character is the Christian's inspiration.** When we see him as he is, desire awakes to be like him, and this elevates the whole man; for "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." [1 John 3:3]—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*,\* August 26, 1890, par. 7.<sup>†</sup> Compare (with capitalization differences) *Reflecting Christ* 304.5. Compare *That I May Know Him* 166.2.

The reason why it seems so difficult to win souls for Christ, is that Satan is continually engaged in misrepresenting the character of God to the human mind. **Christ came to reveal the Father to the world in his true character, that the false conceptions which men entertained of the divine character might be swept away.**—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*,\* May 31, 1892, par. 9.† Compare GC 569.1; 4SP 385.2.

11. John also had some very stirring and potent words to say about Jesus. Read John 1:11-18.

**John 1:1-18:** <sup>1</sup> In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>From the very beginning the Word was with God. <sup>3</sup>Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. <sup>4</sup>The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to humanity. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

<sup>6</sup> God sent his messenger, a man named John, <sup>7</sup>who came to tell people about the light, so that all should hear the message and believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came to tell about the light. <sup>9</sup>This was the real light—the light that comes into the world and shines on everyone.

<sup>10</sup> The Word was in the world, and though God made the world through him, yet the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>**He came to his own country, but his own people did not receive him.** <sup>12</sup>Some, however, did receive him and believed in him; so he gave them the right to become God's children. <sup>13</sup>They did not become God's children by natural means, that is, by being born as the children of a human father; God himself was their Father.

<sup>14</sup> **The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father's only Son.**

<sup>15</sup> John spoke about him. He cried out, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'He comes after me, but he is greater than I am, because he existed before I was born.' "

<sup>16</sup> Out of the fullness of his grace he has blessed us all, giving us one blessing after another. <sup>17</sup>God gave the Law through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>**No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is the same as God and is at the Father's side, he has made him known.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

12. John 1:14,18 tell us clearly that Jesus came to make the truth about His Father known. But, unfortunately, we also read in John 1:11: "He came to his own country, but his own people did not receive him." (*GNB*\*) That is probably the saddest verse in all the Bible.

13. So, why was it necessary for Christ to come to correctly represent the Father?

**The Light appeared when the world's darkness was deepest....**

**There was but one hope for the human race...; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world.**

**Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness.**—Ellen G. White, *Education*\* 74.1-76.2.†

14. Everything Jesus did in His life on earth had a single purpose: **“The revelation of God for the uplifting of humanity.”**—Ellen G. White, *Education\** 82.5.<sup>†</sup>
15. What is amazing is that, despite spending night and day with His group of disciples—for up to 3½ years with some of them—Philip still said to Him: “Lord, show us the Father; that is all we need.” (John 14:8, *GNB\**) And, no doubt, Jesus answered with a pained voice: “For a long time I have been with you all; yet you do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14:9, *GNB\**) And that was a conversation that took place in the upper room the night before He was crucified!
16. We now live almost 2000 years later and have the advantage of having the New Testament and the writings of Ellen White to assist us. Do we still need the Holy Spirit to show us the Father? How many Seventh-day Adventist correctly and fully understand the issues in the great controversy including how to correctly interpret the third angel’s message?
17. Read Philippians 2:1-11.

**Philippians 2:1-11:** <sup>1</sup>Your life in Christ makes you strong, and his love comforts you. You have fellowship with the Spirit, and you have kindness and compassion for one another. <sup>2</sup>I urge you, then, to make me completely happy by having the same thoughts, sharing the same love, and being one in soul and mind. <sup>3</sup>Don’t do anything from selfish ambition or from a cheap desire to boast, but be humble towards one another, always considering others better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>And look out for one another’s interests, not just for your own.

**<sup>5</sup>The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had:**

<sup>6</sup> He always had the nature of God,  
but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God.

<sup>7</sup> Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had,  
and took the nature of a servant.  
He became like a human being  
and appeared in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup> He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death—his death on the cross.

<sup>9</sup> For this reason God raised him to the highest place above  
and gave him the name that is greater than any other name.

<sup>10</sup> **And so, in honour of the name of Jesus  
all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below  
will fall on their knees,**

<sup>11</sup> **and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.**—*Good News Bible.\*†*

18. Notice how this passage deals with Christ’s divinity, His incarnation, His humanity, and His acceptance of death on the cross! It is impossible to imagine anyone coming down from Christ’s position in heaven and dying the death of a common criminal, crucified on a cross. Could anyone lower Himself more than that?
19. So, what can we learn from the life and death of Jesus? Think about His ministry, His miracles, His teachings, and His sermons.

**2 Corinthians 5:16-21:** <sup>16</sup> No longer, then, do we judge anyone by human standards. Even if at one time we judged Christ according to human standards, we no longer do so. <sup>17</sup> Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. <sup>19</sup> Our message is that **God was making the whole human race his friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins**, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends.

<sup>20</sup> Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: **let God change you from enemies into his friends!** <sup>21</sup> Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God.—*Good News Bible*.\*†

20. Imagine the incredible suggestions being made in these verses. Compare John 15:15.

**John 15:15:** "I do not call you servants any longer, because servants do not know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father."—*Good News Bible*.\*†

21. God has reached down from the very throne room of heaven to reconcile us; He wants us to be His friends! The human race has run away from Him just about as far as we can go. But, God is constantly pursuing us, asking us to come back. Will we respond?

22. What does God plan to accomplish by His incredible humiliation?

**Colossians 1:15-20:** <sup>15</sup> **Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God.** He is the firstborn Son, superior to all created things. <sup>16</sup> For through him God created everything in heaven and on earth, the seen and the unseen things, including spiritual powers, lords, rulers, and authorities. God created the whole universe through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> Christ existed before all things, and in union with him all things have their proper place. <sup>18</sup> He is the head of his body, the church; he is the source of the body's life. He is the firstborn Son, who was raised from death, in order that he alone might have the first place in all things. <sup>19</sup> **For it was by God's own decision that the Son has in himself the full nature of God.** <sup>20</sup> **Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through his Son's blood on the cross and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and **God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was **pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures.** The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. **Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes....**

**Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and**

giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,—to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, “I have manifested thy name.” “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men.—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,\* January 20, 1890, par. 6,9.<sup>†</sup> Compare and contrast *ST*, December 4, 1893; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, 358.3-359.1; *RH*, August 14, 1900; *YI*, November 21, 1883; *RH*, November 1, 1892, par. 12.

23. **God’s plan was to speak volumes of truths to the entire universe. The core message of that plan was for Jesus Christ to reveal the truth about His Father. That was the whole purpose of His own mission on this earth!**
24. So, why do many who call themselves Christians believe that Jesus came only to die and “pay the price” for our sins. Jesus actually came for something so much bigger than that!
25. While we could never match the cosmic scale of the Master Teacher’s work as Reconciler, we are invited to participate in “the ministry of reconciliation” in our own sphere. (2 Corinthians 5:18) Could this be what was in Jesus’s mind when He prayed: “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world”? (John 17:18, *NKJV*\*)
26. What is incredible is that just being born as a baby boy was a witness to a few individuals who never forgot! We know about Joseph and Mary, the shepherds watching their flocks around Bethlehem, and the wise men who came from the east. But, consider this:

**An angel visits the earth to see who are prepared to welcome Jesus. But he can discern no tokens of expectancy. He hears no voice of praise and triumph that the period of the Messiah’s coming is at hand. The angel hovers for a time over the chosen city [Jerusalem] and the temple where the divine presence was manifested for ages; but even here is the same indifference.** The priests, in their pomp and pride, are offering polluted sacrifices in the temple. The Pharisees are with loud voices addressing the people, or making boastful prayers at the corners of the streets. **There is no evidence that Christ is expected, and no preparation for the Prince of life.**

**In amazement the celestial messenger is about to return to Heaven with the shameful tidings, when he discovers a group of shepherds who are watching their flocks by night, and, as they gaze into the starry heavens, are contemplating the prophecy of a Messiah to come to earth, and longing for the advent of the world’s Redeemer. Here is a company that can be trusted with the heavenly message.** And suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared, declaring the good tidings of great joy. Celestial [199] glory flooded all the plain, an innumerable company of angels were revealed, and as if the joy were too great for one messenger to bring from Heaven, a multitude of voices broke forth in the anthem which all the nations of the saved shall one day sing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”—Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*,\* vol. 4, 198.1-199.0.<sup>††</sup> Compare *Great Controversy* 314.1-2.

27. Try to imagine yourself there that night, watching sheep on the hills of Bethlehem when the angels appeared to those shepherds.

28. See the story in Luke 2:8-20.

**Luke 2:8-20:** <sup>8</sup> There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. <sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, <sup>10</sup>but the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. <sup>11</sup>This very day in David’s town your Saviour was born—Christ the Lord! <sup>12</sup>And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.”

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great army of heaven’s angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God:

<sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!”

<sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us.”

<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. <sup>18</sup>All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. <sup>19</sup>Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them.—*Good News Bible*.\*

29. Suppose you were an angel sent by God to either tell Mary or Joseph, or the wise men, or even to sing on the hills of Bethlehem. Considering what we know about the status of the human race at that point in time, what would you have thought your chances were for making an impression? We do not know if Mary had a midwife to help her deliver her baby. We do not know how long her labor lasted. We only know that the Baby was laid in a manger which was probably made of wood or stone, a feeding trough for animals. What did the angels think when they saw that?
30. The Creator of our universe which is so large we cannot even begin to grasp it, condensed Himself into the body of a baby boy!
31. This series of lessons is about Christian education. Think of the waste it would be, no matter how thorough your education was, if you did not know about this most important story in the history of our universe! Do we recognize what the Father in heaven is like because of the witness of Jesus? Is His witness convincing? And if we recognize that we have fallen short of God’s ideal for us and we are not representing Him correctly, are we prepared to ask forgiveness and keep moving forward?
32. We are told that, one day, God will show us the events of the great controversy in 3D, living color! (See *The Great Controversy* 666ff.) Are you excited about the possibility of seeing for yourself what actually happened in all of those stories? Are you witnessing to the truth about God every day in whatever your profession or calling?
33. Who was Jesus of Nazareth? Your answer should depend upon the background of the person to whom you are speaking. To a child dying of cancer in the hospital, the message should be very simple and straightforward: “Jesus loves you, and He is your Friend.” But, to someone with some theological training and seeking a deeper understanding of the truth, are you prepared to tell him/her the truth about God’s character?

34. *Passing the torch* is an English idiom taken from a race in which each runner passes a torch or baton to the runner who is succeeding him in the race. In this lesson, we have seen that God passed the torch to His Son, Jesus Christ. And we see the following in Jesus:

“He [Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God.” (Hebrews 1:3, *ESV\**)<sup>‡</sup>

Jesus is “the exact imprint of his [God’s] nature.” (Hebrews 1:3, *ESV\**)<sup>‡</sup>

“The glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4, *ESV\**)

“The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6, *ESV\**)

“Whoever has seen me [Jesus] has seen the Father.” (John 14:9, *ESV\**)<sup>‡</sup>

35. Now it is time for that torch or baton to be passed from Jesus to us. Will we do the job of witnessing to the world so the history of evil can be wrapped up and concluded?

36. Jesus has not left us to flounder around, trying to accomplish this task by ourselves. The Holy Spirit has been sent to help us in every way He can. Could we possibly ask for a better Associate in this task?

37. There are many verses in the Bible suggesting that while Jesus was the express image of God, we also were, or are to be, made in God’s image. (See Genesis 1:26; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; John 8:12; Matthew 5:14.)

38. Are we prepared to pick up the baton or torch and carry it forward?

39. The Greek word *charakter* originally was used to describe an engraving tool. Later, it came to include the mark made by such a tool. Often, these tools were used to impress the image of an important ruler on a coin.

40. Remember Jesus’s words after showing them a coin: “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s.” (Matthew 22:21, *KJV\**) Now that 2000 years have passed, God is waiting to gather “coins” that have been impressed with His character.

Speaking like a Christian, attending church like a Christian, explicating doctrines like a Christian, and calling oneself a Christian are never replacements for actually being a Christian. There is no population that understands this difference better than our children, who are watching every move their parents, their teachers, and their religious leaders make. They may not be able to articulate it, but they are either consciously or unconsciously evaluating Adventist education based on how Adventists live. This is the bottom line. This is why bearing the image of God in our daily lives is nonnegotiable if we want to see Adventist education succeed.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 68.

41. On a daily basis, are we beholding and becoming changed into the image of Christ? Are our instructors, teachers, and professors fully qualified to represent Jesus Christ as they teach our children?

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