

The Wonder of Jesus Lesson 2 2Q 2008

The Mystery of His Deity

SABBATH

Read memory text - as a review from last week's lesson, what is the significance of this passage? Why was Jesus the member of the Godhead through whom creation was completed?

Read first paragraph "Leaving the historical..." – thoughts?

Do we believe this to be true? Do we believe that our unaided sin-filled, selfish, human minds, cannot, without God's aide, comprehend Him, His character or spiritual truths?

What is the implication of this? Would it not be that to the degree someone is speaking the truth about God they are doing so only because the Holy Spirit enlightened their mind with such truth?

Doesn't this eliminate arguments over whether so and so has the gift of prophecy or not, shouldn't the question be instead, did so and so speak the truth about God, the truth in harmony with scripture?

Read last paragraph "To believe in Jesus..." thoughts? Are you comforted or troubled to realize Jesus was different from you and me?

SUNDAY

Let's start from the bottom and work up in this lesson. Today's lesson is about the pre-existence of Christ and the bottom pink section asks, "What other aspects of our beliefs, contrary to accepted norms, customs, and ways of thinking, do we have to take on raw, naked faith and nothing else?"

Do you accept the premise that we are to believe on raw naked faith and nothing else?

If you told you five year old child they are to have faith in God, raw, naked, and nothing else. Then you leave your child at the play ground and a stranger comes up and says to your child, "I am a prophet from God and He sent me to get you for a special mission. Come with me." Should your child go on raw naked faith?

If a stranger comes up to you in the mall and asks for the keys to your house and car, would you give them to him on raw naked faith?

If your spouse, who has been loving, faithful, caring, loyal your entire marriage tells you they have a present for you in the closet – would you believe them? On the basis of the present? Do you have any evidence of the present? Do you have evidence of the trustworthiness of your spouse?

Has God given us evidence of His existence and trustworthiness? Yes, then when He tells us things that we don't have evidence for, mansions in heaven, eternal life, streets of gold etc. is our belief in the reality of these things raw and naked without evidence or is it based on the evidence of God's trustworthiness?

So what evidence do we have for the existence and trustworthiness of God?

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

The nature of God is love, can we see God's character of love in nature? Where? What does this reveal to us? That the law of life is the law of love and that this law is not the law of survival

of the fittest in fact the law of survival of the fittest in the infection of selfishness destroying God's creation.

Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul.

The life of Christ reveals the truth about God's character of love in contrast to selfishness, which wins us back to trust.

The pre-existence of Christ – meaning His existence before being born of a woman – why is this important?

If He did not exist prior to coming in human form then He is merely part of this creation, in other words He would have been unable to save us – why?

Because He would not have been able to reveal the truth about God to win us to trust, but also, He would not have been able to restore the Law of Love back into this creation, back into this species. By His unique life He merged divinity with humanity and purged the sickness from humanity by overcoming with His perfect character of love!

Step one – we must be drawn back to God in trust, the love of God must win us to Him so we will open the heart for healing,

Romans 2:4 God's kindness leads you toward repentance

One of the founders of our church states:

The greatest gift that God could bestow upon men was bestowed in the gift of his beloved Son. The apostle says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" There was nothing held in reserve. No second probation will ever be provided. If the unspeakable gift of God does not lead man to repentance, there is nothing that ever will move his heart. There is no power held in reserve to act upon his mind, and arouse his sensibilities.

The whole character of God was revealed in his Son, the whole range of the possibilities of heaven is displayed for the acceptance of man in the Son of the Infinite One. The way for man's return to God and heaven has no barriers. The matchless depths of the Saviour's love have been demonstrated; and if this manifestation of God's love for the children of men does not prevail to draw men to himself, there is nothing that ever will. {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 6}

The truth about God's character of love as revealed in His Son wins us back to trust – but is that enough? Or was more needed? What was needed?

What does the law of God require?

John 3:3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."
"

Eze 36:26,27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Heb 8:10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.

What is needed besides trust in God? A recreation of heart and mind, God's character reproduced within, the law of love perfectly restored in us. Notice the progression of EGW's description:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the

law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. 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. {DA 761.4}

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God. {DA 761.5}

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5:19. {DA 762.1}

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ

imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Thoughts?

MONDAY

Did Jesus know He was pre-existent? What evidence?

John 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

John 8:23 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

John 17:5-8,24 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me... "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph – “The expression...” Thoughts?

Could it mean one unique, one of a kind, only one? Yes, and Jesus was God’s only Son in heaven in His pre-existent state, but when He voluntarily chose to become incarnate He became a new unique being in all history.

Adam was formed out of the dust of the ground and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a perfect sinless human, and Eve was created perfect and sinless from side.

All other humans, except Jesus, are born of a sinful mother and father.

Jesus however, was born of a sinful mother, Gal 4:4, but His Father was God. He was born with a humanity capable of experiencing temptation in every way like us Hebrews 4:15 yet without sin, and we are tempted by our own feelings or desires James 1:13. Jesus therefore was a unique being capable of being tempted, even by His assumed humanity, yet at every turn His mind, fully in harmony with the circle of love overcame all temptations with love. Thus in Christ God’s character of love was perfectly restored into this creation. And because of Christ we can receive from Him the download of His character and methods via the work of the Holy Spirit.

WEDNESDAY

The Deity of Christ – why is Christ so important in establishing the worthiness of the deity?

“What is the deepest in God? His Power? No, for power could not make him what we mean when we say God. A being whose essence was only power would be such a negation of the divine that no righteous worship could be offered him; his service would be only fear.” MacDonald,

George, *Discovering the Character of God*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989, p. 29.

Zech 4:6 Not by might nor by power but by the Spirit says the Lord

Was this important just for mankind or for the universe as well?

Colossians 1:16-20 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph "The New Testament..." thoughts?

Does Jesus claim to be the final Judge?

John 5:27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

John 8:15, 16 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. ¹⁶ But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me.

John 12:47,48 "As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge

for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.

Do we believe Jesus? Why is not necessary for Jesus to judge? Because our very condition is self-determining, we either have been won back to trust and transformed in heart such that we rejoice at His return or we have refused the truth, hardened the heart and run and hide begging the rocks and trees to hide us when He returns. Our own condition determines our destiny.

Read bottom paragraph – do we believe this is true? What does it mean to realize that the Father is exactly like Jesus? How has this changed your life?

FRIDAY

Read 2 and discuss.