



## 2024 Q4 Thems from the Gospel of John - Lesson 2 Signs of Christ's Divinity

by Russell Atkins

### SABBATH

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Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?' (John 11:25, 26, *NKJV*).

From the Lesson:

The Bible is clear that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son, one with the Father, underived and uncreated. Jesus is the One who created all that was made (John 1:1–3). Thus, Jesus has always existed; there never was a time when He didn't exist. Though Jesus came to this world and took upon Himself our humanity, He always kept His divinity. And at specific times, Jesus said and did things that revealed this divinity.

This concept of Jesus being wholly human and wholly Devine has been a difficult one for me to assimilate. How could He be “wholly” 2 different beings? Anyone else have difficulties with this concept?

The lesson focuses on Jesus' “Signs of Divinity” this week, specifically three [Feeding the 5,000; Healing the man born blind; and the resurrection of Lazarus]. Let's unpack these events in more detail, but before we do an important reminder from Lesson 1:

It is important to recognize that miracles, in and of themselves, did not prove that Jesus was the Messiah. Others have performed miracles. Some were true prophets, others false. Miracles reveal only the existence of the supernatural; they don't, by themselves, mean that God must be the One doing them. (Satan can perform “miracles,” if by the word “miracles” we mean supernatural acts.)

### SUNDAY

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#### **The Feeding of the Five Thousand.**

From this week's lesson:

In John 6:4, 5, the apostle goes out of his way to state that the timing of the feeding of the 5,000 was near the Passover. The Passover was a commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. The Passover lamb took the place of the death of the firstborn. This sacrifice

symbolized the death of Jesus in our behalf. **On the cross, the punishment that we deserved because of our sins fell on Jesus instead.** Christ, our Passover, was indeed slain for us (1 Cor. 5:7). emphasis mine.

“He bore the guilt of transgression, and the hiding of His Father’s face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out. All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 540.

Did Jesus bear the “punishment for sins” or did he bear Sin itself? Understand the distinction. If you believe God’s Law functions like human laws then you begin to see “sins” as the illness, not symptoms of the illness and if we can somehow manage the symptoms we will be well. Sin, itself, is not actually destructive — the destruction comes out from an angry and offended God. If you understand that God’s Law is the design for life, then “sins” are symptoms of the disease [Sin] and in order to eliminate the disease, the Trinity planned, developed, and offer a Remedy to terminal humanity to cure the disease and thus they symptoms [sins] disappear over time.

In the past 10 years, and especially in the last 4, I have come to the conclusion that our Western medicine approach strongly reinforces the above idea — that if we can just treat the symptoms we will be healthy. According to the CDC [I know, take it with a bucket of salt], the USA spends \$87 Billion annually on the flu [<https://www.cdcfoundation.org/pr/flu-costs-United-States-87-billion-annually>], and \$40 Billion on the common cold [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12588210/>]. Let that breathe a bit. \$87 Billion/\$40 Billion with a **B** ...

During the Covidiocy®, how many articles, pundits, government propagandists did you hear telling citizens to eat healthy?, stay hydrated?, get a good night’s sleep?, exercise?, meditate on a loving God?, socialize with friends/family? I didn’t hear any of that. They told us the exact opposite — Stay inside, don’t socialize, order delivery food, gyms are closed. Don’t socialize [unless you’re at a BLM or Antifa riot]. Liquor stores and casinos are critical to our economy, but schools and churches must be shuttered until further notice. Stock up on Tylenol, NyQuil, Red Bull, and upgrade your Netflix subscription, and Operation Warp Speed has just the thing for you ...

I like the lesson’s take on the parallels of Christ’s feeding of the five thousand and the comparison to Moses with the children of Israel.

Numerous details of this story place Jesus in parallel to Moses in the Exodus. The time of the Passover (John 6:4) points to the great deliverance from Egypt. Jesus goes up on a mountain (John 6:3) as Moses went up Sinai. Jesus tests Philip (John 6:5, 6) as the Israelites were tested in the wilderness. The multiplication of the loaves (John 6:11) is reminiscent of the manna. The gathering of the leftover food (John 6:12) harks back to the Israelites’ gathering the manna. Twelve baskets of leftovers are picked up (John 6:13), the same number as the twelve tribes of Israel. And the people comment that Jesus is the prophet coming into the world (John 6:14), parallel to the “prophet like Moses” predicted in Deuteronomy 18:15. All of this points to Jesus as the new Moses—come to deliver His people.

It’s important to remember that Jesus was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the

Red Sea / Wilderness, etc, NOT Moses. Moses was a **type** of messiah, not **the** Messiah.

## **MONDAY**

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### **Surely, He Is the Prophet**

It wasn't only the pharisees and sadducees that were looking for a temporal Messiah, it was the rank and file jews, and Christ's own disciples that thought the Messiah was going to throw off the Roman shackles and put the jewish nation in control of the world [this belief persists to this day].

I like the lessons focus on the "I AM" texts [see below]. It hearkens back to Moses' question,

Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" Exodus 3: 13,

and God's response in v. 14.

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Exodus 3: 14.

From the lesson:

But that's not why Jesus had come, and that wasn't the purpose of His miracle. Instead, the account of the feeding of the 5,000 provided the opportunity to illustrate that Jesus is the Bread of Life, that God Himself came down from heaven. " 'I am the bread of life,' " He said. " 'He who comes to Me shall never hunger' (John 6:35, NKJV).

This is the first of the seven "I am" statements in the Gospel of John, where "I am" is connected with some predicate ("bread of life," John 6:35; "light of the world," John 8:12; "door," John 10:7, 9; "Good Shepherd," John 10:11, 14; "resurrection and the life," John 11:25; "the way, the truth, and the life," John 14:6; "true vine," John 15:1, 5). Each of these points to an important truth about Jesus. The "I am" statements point back to Exodus 3, where God presents Himself to Moses as the great I AM (compare with John 8:58). Jesus is that great I AM.

## **TUESDAY**

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### **The Healing of the Blind Man [part I].**

The lesson points out that the disciples thought sin & sickness were connected. Sin & sickness are connected, however, not in the way the disciples believed. They thought sickness / injury was God's punishment for sin, and some of those same beliefs [superstitions] persist to today. One of my previous girlfriend's mother had advanced rheumatoid arthritis. She had multiple surgeries for joint replacements and had to wear a cervical collar due to cervical spine instability [if she fell she could

have been paralyzed]. A “friend” of hers had the good grace to inform her that her illness was due to some cherished sin and if she just repented, she would be whole. This comment reinforced her pre-existing atheism, as she refused to believe in a God construct that would do something like that. I did my best to reveal that God is not like that, but I don’t think I succeeded.

To be clear there is absolutely a connection between Sin [Biblical definition] and disease. All disease is an ultimate result of being out of harmony with God’s original Design Law. The disciples believed injury/sickness was **punishment** for some unrepentant sin.

We have touched on this story, multiple times, in class, but it bears repeating. Christ not only healed the man’s eyesight - He uploaded new software in to the man’s brain to allow him to recognize his parents; to know what a dog looked like; and to know the difference between colors. I like the lesson author’s efforts in tying this to Creation [Man’s original design formed from dust/clay/Earth] and this miracle using the same material, and his efforts connecting physical / spiritual blindness together. Jesus tells the disciples/crowd

Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Are we to believe God made or allowed this man to be born blind just to reveal His power?? That doesn’t sound like the God I now know.

This miracle occurred on The Sabbath [John 9:14], and the ~~General Conference~~ church leadership decided that Jesus had broken the law, while some of the Pharisees said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was division among them [v. 16]. It’s almost like that group likes to argue...

From the bottom, pink section of the lesson:

What should this story tell us about the dangers of being so blinded by our own beliefs and traditions that we can miss important truths right before our own eyes?

Yes — What indeed? Do we still see individuals blinded by belief/tradition? Do we see institutions blinded by belief/tradition?

Review of “The Law of Truth” from Tim’s Blog [<https://comeandreason.com/design-laws-of-god/>]

- The law of truth: You can never avoid the truth; you can only delay the day you deal with it.
  - When truth is embraced and accepted, it displaces lies and frees a person from fear and misunderstanding, elevating and ennobling the individual. Truths build together into beliefs, constructs, and perspectives that form our understanding of reality, leading us back to trust in our Creator God. In trust, we open our hearts and experience the indwelling Spirit of God that transforms and ennobles us to be beings of love rather

than beings of selfishness. All truth comes from God and, if followed, will lead back to God.

- When truth is rejected, our understanding is confused, our mind is damaged, our heart is hardened, and we slowly become less capable of understanding reality — the truth of God’s kingdom and the world around us. Such individuals will one day face the truth, but it will be painful and destructive to them as they still hate the truth and want to flee from it, even begging for the mountains and rocks to hide them from reality (Luke 23:30).

\*\*I would add that the public acceptance of advancing Truth follows a predictable pathway.\*\*

1. New Truth is first ignored.
2. New Truth is then scorned / mocked / derided.
3. New Truth is then opposed, often violently.
4. New Truth is finally accepted as **self evident**.

As an aside, I highly recommend everyone watch Conrad Vine’s sermon “Remnant, Respectable, or Regime Church?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8TEwQ4717Q>. Search the sermon title if corporate Adventism had YouTube remove the sermon.

## **WEDNESDAY**

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### **The Healing of the Blind Man [part II].**

Keeping in mind the “Law of Truth” noted above, let’s unpack the rest of the story of the blind man’s healing. The lesson does a great job contrasting the healed man’s advancing faith and improved “sight” both literally and figuratively, while the church leadership scorned him, saying he was “born in utter sin” [see step 2 in advancing Truth] and thus advanced in their “blindness”. When we reject Truth, the only thing left to believe in is lies [2 Thess. 2:11].

From the Lesson:

Meanwhile, his recounting of this miracle gives John the opportunity to tell us who Jesus is. The theme of signs in John 9 intersects with several other themes in the Gospel. John reaffirms that Jesus is the Light of the world (John 9:5; compare with John 8:12). The story also deals with Jesus’ mysterious origin. Who is He, where is He from, what is His mission (John 9:12, 29; compare with John 1:14)? The figure of Moses, who is referenced in previous miracle accounts, also appears in this chapter (John 9:28, 29; compare with John 5:45, 46 and John 6:32). Finally, there is the theme of the response of the crowd. Some love darkness rather than light, while others respond in faith (John 9:16–18, 35–41; compare with John 1:9–16, John 3:16–21, and John 6:60–71).

So scary here is the spiritual blindness of the religious leaders. A once-blind beggar can declare, “ ‘Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one

who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing' ” (John 9:32, 33, NKJV). And yet the religious leaders, the spiritual guides of the nation, the ones who should have been the first to recognize Jesus and accept Him as the Messiah—they, despite all the powerful evidence, cannot see it, or they don't really want to see it. **What a powerful warning about how our hearts can deceive us!**” emphasis mine.

Does that last sentence trigger anything in your memory bank?? [Jer. 17:9].

## THURSDAY

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### The Resurrection of Lazarus

This is a very familiar story, but many things get missed. Consider

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. Then after this He said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again. John 11: 5-7

I had never, before, considered that Jesus stayed away BECAUSE he loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus so much.

The disciples marveled at Christ's words when He said, “Lazarus is dead. And I am glad ... that I was not there.” Did the Saviour by His own choice avoid the home of His suffering friends? Apparently Mary and Martha and the dying Lazarus were left alone. But they were not alone. Christ beheld the whole scene, and after the death of Lazarus the bereaved sisters were upheld by His grace. Jesus witnessed the sorrow of their rent hearts, as their brother wrestled with his strong foe, death. He felt every pang of anguish, as He said to His disciples, “Lazarus is dead.” But Christ had not only the loved ones at Bethany to think of; He had the training of His disciples to consider. They were to be His representatives to the world, that the Father's blessing might embrace all. For their sake He permitted Lazarus to die. Had He restored him from illness to health, the miracle that is the most positive evidence of His divine character, would not have been performed. Had Christ been in the sickroom, Lazarus would not have died; for Satan would have had no power over him. Death could not have aimed his dart at Lazarus in the presence of the Life-giver. Therefore Christ remained away. He suffered the enemy to exercise his power, that He might drive him back, a conquered foe. He permitted Lazarus to pass under the dominion of death; and the suffering sisters saw their brother laid in the grave. Christ knew that as they looked on the dead face of their brother their faith in their Redeemer would be severely tried. But He knew that because of the struggle through which they were now passing their faith would shine forth with far greater power. He suffered every pang of sorrow that they endured. He loved them no less because He tarried; but He knew that for them, for Lazarus, for Himself, and for His disciples, a victory was to be gained. DA 528

Martha understood that if Christ had been present, Lazarus would not have died [John 11: 20-22]. It's noteworthy that after this miracle the ~~GC~~ Church Leadership doubled their efforts to kill Jesus [see

John 11: 38-57], including Caiaphas famous statement: **“You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.”**

Do we not see a similar attitude from the same group today?