

Lesson 1 of 17

Whom Do Men Say That I The Son of Man Am?

The Purpose of His Human Nature

Jesus asked His disciples, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am” and their answer revealed that men thought that He was John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. In other words they only saw Him as a man, they did not discern His divinity.

This same issue confronts humanity today in the question, “Did Christ take the nature of Adam before the Fall or after the Fall?”. However, **this** question is asked in a way that prejudices the mind against seeing the divinity of Christ. But as the Father revealed to the disciples of Christ the truth of Who He was so will the Father unmask this deceptive question, prepared to deceive, if possible, the very elect, and show the disciples of Christ today that He is truly “the Son of the living God”!

There are seventeen lessons to this study. The first six address basic concepts such as the purpose of the human nature of Christ, then the definitions of important words, the third will address the question, what is sin, the fourth investigates the nature of Adam before the Fall, the fifth reveals the change in the nature of man after the Fall and the sixth study will reveal how man is tempted. These first six lessons lay the foundation for the last twelve.

Lessons seven through fifteen will apply the foundation of the first six lessons to the Bible verses that are frequently misapplied by many who unwittingly deny the divinity of Christ and are repeating the history of the Jewish nation in accusing Christ of breaking the Sabbath, not in the letter of the law but in the spirit of the law!

The Bible verses specifically addressed in this study that are frequently misapplied are Galatians 4:4, Romans 8:3, Hebrews 2:14 and Hebrews 4:15. Because the principles of the foundation are used in all these studies there will be much repetition throughout these seventeen lessons.

The goal of this first study is to show that one of the reasons that Jesus took human nature was to veil the outward glory of God with the human **body** while possessing **the law of God within His human heart**, and the vital importance of the relationship of the law of God in His humanity!

Psalms 40:7-8

“Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book [it is] written of me, ⁸I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law [is] within my heart.”

It will be seen that the law of God is not only a transcript of His character but an expression of the very nature of God!

In Hebrews Paul says that the Father prepared “a body” for His Son.

Hebrews 10:5, 7

“Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but **a body** hast thou prepared me: ⁷Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.”

In the *Desire of Ages* God's prophet quotes these verses and then explains why.

“Had He appeared with the **glory** that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured **the light of His presence**. That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the **manifestation of His glory** was shrouded. **His divinity** was veiled with humanity,—the **invisible glory** in the **visible human form**.” {DA 23}

In our sinful condition we would have been instantly destroyed in the light of His presence; therefore the manifestation of His outward glory was shrouded. What does shrouded mean?

SHROUD'ED, pp. Dressed; covered; concealed; sheltered; overwhelmed.

If something is covered is it still there?

So what was covered and what was it covered with?

Are there any places in the Old Testament that prefigured the glory of God veiled with humanity?

Continuing on in {DA 23}

“This great purpose had been shadowed forth in types and symbols. The **burning bush**, in which Christ appeared to Moses, revealed God. The symbol chosen for the representation of the Deity was a lowly shrub, that **seemingly** had no attractions. This enshrined the Infinite. The all-merciful God shrouded **His glory** in a most humble type, that Moses could look upon *it* and live. So in **the pillar of cloud by day** and the **pillar of fire by night**, God communicated with Israel, revealing to men His will, and imparting to them His grace. **God's glory was subdued**, and **His majesty veiled**, that the weak vision of finite men might behold it.” {DA 23}

There are three symbols mentioned in this paragraph that represented the Deity.

1. The burning bush – this bush was a prickly brier bush
2. The pillar of cloud by day
3. The pillar of fire by night

What did these things shroud or cover?

- God's glory.

And why did God shroud His glory?

- So that Moses could look upon **His glory** and still live.

Did the lowly shrub have any attractions? What does seemingly mean?

SEE'MINGLY, adv. In appearance; in show; in semblance.

What is the **glory** of God? What did God shroud or cover in the burning bush?

Exodus 33:18-20

“And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy **glory**. ¹⁹And he said, I will make **all my goodness** pass before thee, and I will proclaim **the name of the LORD** before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.”

Exodus 34:6-7

“And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ⁷Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear [the guilty]; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth [generation].”

When Moses asked God to show him His glory God showed Him His goodness. What is the goodness of God? What was God revealing to Moses?

“The glory of God is his character, and it is manifested to us in Christ.” {SSW, July 1, 1894 par. 5} (SSW – Sabbath School Worker)

“If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! What is it to have a single eye?--It is to have a **disposition** to look upon Christ; for **by beholding, we become changed from glory to glory, from character to character**.” {YI, September 14, 1893 par. 8}

Therefore while the burning bush did not manifest an outward attraction what aspect of God's character did it manifest? His humility and condescension!

Continuing on in {DA 23}

“So Christ was to come in '**the body** of our humiliation' (Phil. 3:21, R. V.), 'in the **likeness of men**.' In the eyes of the world He possessed no beauty that they should desire Him; yet He was the incarnate God, the light of heaven and earth. **His glory was veiled**, His greatness and majesty were hidden, that He might draw near to sorrowful, tempted men.” {DA 23}

Here our prophet links together two very interesting passages from Scripture, Philipians

3:21, ***“the body of our humiliation”***, and Philippians 2:7, ***“in the likeness of men”***. And it is interesting that she quotes Philippians 3:21 from the Revised Version, “the body of our humiliation” instead of “our vile body” as the King James Bible reads. Both words are translated from the same Greek word and as we study the subject of the humanity of Christ we will see the importance of why she did this.

The subject of the humanity, the human nature, of Christ has been a controversial subject dividing hundreds if not thousands of those who profess to be God's children. The burning bush was a symbol of the humanity of Christ in which the outward manifestation of God's glory was veiled within “the casket [the human body]” that contained the mind of God! In the human nature of Christ is found the revelation of the glory, the character, the thoughts and feelings, of God toward fallen, sinful men!

Is the glory of God, His character, an important testing truth at this time?

“In the book of Revelation we read of a special work that God desires to have His people do in these last days. ***He has revealed His law*** and shown us ***the truth for this time***. This truth **is constantly unfolding**, and God designs that we shall be intelligent in regard to it, that we may be able to distinguish between right and wrong, between righteousness and unrighteousness. ***The third angel's message, the great testing truth for this time***, is to be taught in all our institutions.” {6T 127-128}

The ***truth for this time*** that is constantly unfolding is ***truth revealed in the law of God***. But before looking at God's law in relation to the ***third Angel's message, the great testing truth for this time***, notice what she says regarding the third angel's message.

“Several have written to me, inquiring if **the message of justification by faith** is the third angel's message, and I have answered, **‘It is the third angel's message in verity.’**”

{RH, April 1, 1890 par. 8}

Now notice the danger that God's people face regarding justification by faith, the third angel's message, the great testing truth for this time.

“The danger has been presented to me again and again of entertaining, as a people, false ideas of justification by faith. I have been shown for years that Satan would work in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point. The law of God has been largely dwelt upon and has been presented to congregations, almost as destitute of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His relation to the law as was the offering of Cain.” {1888 810.3}

Going back to what Sister White said in 6T notice that before saying anything about truth she prefaces her comments by saying that God “has ***revealed His law*** and shown us ***the truth for this time***.” What is the relationship between the God's law and truth?

Psalms 119:151

“Thou [art] near, O LORD; and **all thy commandments [are] truth.**”

Therefore the things that she is going to say about truth are relating to the law of God. What are they?

1. Truth is constantly unfolding.
2. God designs that we shall be intelligent in regard to truth.
3. Being intelligent in regard to truth enables us to distinguish between right and wrong.
4. Being intelligent in regard to truth enables us to distinguish between righteousness and unrighteousness.
5. The third angel's message is not only the truth for this time it is the great testing truth for this time.
6. This great testing truth is to be taught in all our institutions.

John 14:6

“**Jesus saith** unto him, **I am** the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

The humanity of Christ is intimately and indivisibly connected with all six points above and it is my prayer that as we study this sacred subject that the Holy Spirit will reveal to us a deeper understanding “of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His relation to the law” so that we would not entertain false ideas of Justification by Faith!

How does the law of God relate to the character of God?

“Every Christian should be determined that he will not, in word or action, dishonor the law of God. **This law is an expression of the character of God, a revelation of what every minister of the Gospel, every teacher, every man, woman, and child, should be.**” {ST, October 2, 1901}

Does the law of God have anything to do with His nature?

“**The law of God is an expression of His very nature**; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth.” {SC 60}

“God means that **testing truth** shall be brought to the front, and become a subject of examination and discussion, even if it is through the contempt placed upon it. The minds of the people must be agitated. Every controversy, every reproach, every slander, will be God's means of provoking inquiry, and awakening minds that otherwise would slumber.” {RH, December 11, 1888 par. 9}

And remember the testing truth for this time is the third Angel's message, the message of Justification by Faith!

The above quote has reference to the testing truths for the time in which we live and it

was a controversy that led me to study more thoroughly the subject of the human nature of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This study has been a tremendous blessing to me and the following quote has been my personal experience:

“Many have, as had Moses, very much to unlearn in order to learn the very lessons that they need to learn.” 2MR 265

What was the controversy? An individual who believes that Jesus took the nature of Adam after his fall, which I also believed, said the following:

“It is not a sin to have a carnal mind. It is only a sin if you allow that carnal mind to become sin.”

1. “I have a carnal mind....He (Christ) also had that fallen sinful mind.”
2. “I’m not interested in knowing that Christ could live a perfect life outside of a carnal mind. I already know that can be done.”

During the conversation in which the above statements were made a retired SDA minister in the congregation said, “I think we need to understand what the carnal mind is. The carnal mind is a mind that desires evil, desires sin. It is governed by evil and when we become a Christian we no longer have a carnal mind because now you have the mind of Jesus.” With this comment the above individual said,

3. “Brother it’s not a sin to desire evil. It is a sin to do evil.”

Is it a sin to desire evil?

Shortly after the above statements were made in a public meeting, the individual who made these statements authored a statement of beliefs for an historic SDA church in which the following statement was made and approved by the church board:

4. “We believe that Christ came in Adams post fall nature in every respect, to include not only His physical nature but His mental and spiritual nature also.”

As a result of these and similar statements I began to examine more closely the human nature of Christ. I believed that Jesus came in the post fall nature of Adam, how else could He be my example, but I did not and do not believe that Jesus had a carnal mind.

The Bible texts that I clung to as I began this study is found in Romans and Matthew.

Romans 8:6,7

“For to be carnally minded is death...the carnal mind is enmity against God:”

Matthew 5:28

“...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

“To redeem man, Christ became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. **The humanity of the Son of God** is everything to us. It **is the golden linked chain** which binds our souls to Christ and through Christ to God. **THIS IS TO BE OUR STUDY. Christ was a real man**, and He gave proof of His humility in becoming a man. **And He was God in the flesh.** {7BC 904.10}

“**When we approach the subject of Christ's divinity clothed with the garb of humanity**, we may appropriately heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' We must come to the study of this subject with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And **THE STUDY OF THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST IS A FRUITFUL FIELD, and will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truth** (MS 67, 1898).” {7BC 904.11} {*see 15MR 93.2*}

In Christian Love,
Peggy Nixon

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