

5. Noble Prince of Peace

Texts: Isaiah 9-12

Quotes:

- Peace is such a precious jewel that I would give anything for it but truth. *Matthew Henry*
- If you want to know what God has to say to you, see what Christ was and is. *C.H. Spurgeon*
- Jesus became as like us as God can be. *Donald English*

Introductory questions

What are these important and familiar verses in Isaiah 9 telling us? Why are they so significant? This prophecy is hidden among many other verses we don't use—why is this? Why was God so opposed to idol-worship (Isaiah 10)? Why is it only a “remnant” that returns to God? What of the “shoot” in Isaiah 11? How does this picturesque and idyllic vision fit?

Discussion ideas

These chapters contain the well-known verses that are used in Handel's *Messiah*. As we re-read these familiar words, what stands out is the dramatic news that the one to come is not some human messiah, but it is mighty God, everlasting Father! Such a concept must have seemed blasphemous to Isaiah's hearers, who expected God the Father to be terribly remote. Similarly, when the Messiah *did* come, he was not received by his own because they were not expecting such a God. Irony of ironies: God is crucified for being God. Most of all, the One spoken of here is truly God as he is. The question arises, why was God seen so differently?

We may concentrate on the prince of peace, but many other verses here in Isaiah are about war, and God's anger. What do we do with such statements? Are they not as important? Are we reading selectively. Re-read chapter 9 and see what is the greater part of the content...

In these poetic verses we see a conflicted picture, a vision of what is and what could be. In all of this the great controversy is foundational, since the consequences are based on our choices. As the lesson points out, much of the apparent “confusion” or “contradictory” actions of God are based in his responses to us and our choices: “What we see here, as seen all through the Bible, is reality of free will. God made humans free (He had to; otherwise, they could never truly love Him), and freedom involves the option to do wrong. And though time and again God seeks to woo us by revealing His love and character...” (Tuesday's lesson).

For those who believe we should not be social activists, look again at chapter 10. Here we have a clear indictment against those who trample on human rights, and who pervert justice by passing unfair laws. In the end there is a time of judgment, and even though God is very patient with all of us, he also allows us to experience the results of our decisions, and is strongly condemnatory of exploitation and the misuse of power. As a consequence, he allows their enemies to conquer Israel as a way of helping them understand. Note also however that God also against the arrogant pride of his tool, the Assyrians. The aim is to rely on God (10:20).

The vision of vegetarian (straw-eating) lions and other images is clearly designed to fit their ideas. The ultimate objective is the restoration of harmony in God's universe, the at-onement between us and God in which the whole of earthly creation is involved. God promises his healing salvation in the psalm-like poem in chapter 12—water from the wells of salvation.

Ellen White Comments

I perceive there is danger in approaching subjects which dwell on the humanity of the Son of the infinite God . . . Let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such a one as ourselves; for it cannot be. {5 SDABC 1129}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. "Unto *us* a child is born, unto *us* a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the "Son of man" who shares the throne of the universe. It is the "Son of man" whose name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6. {DA 25}

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. {TMK 338}

Extra material

What, would you say, is the greatest heresy? What is the single most important mistake that can be made in the whole of Christian belief? What is the greatest heresy?

The most important and fundamental mistake is over who Jesus is. In some way, somehow, *Christ is not God*. The denial of the divinity of Jesus, in whatever way, and however slight, leads to us going off the rails as far as the truth is concerned. Of course believers don't usually say that they don't believe Christ was God. Nothing so simple. It is much more subtle, the most marginal distortion and perversion of the truth that leads in the end to an apostate Christianity. In some ways, perhaps with the best of motives, even church people are saying that Jesus was someone or something less than God.

This has been true ever since the beginning of the Christian church.

The very first heresy was the Docetist heresy of Gnosticism, against which John wrote his gospel. The Docetists said that when Jesus took human form, he only *appeared* to do so. They believed that all material things were evil, and therefore Jesus could not have taken a real, physical body. It only *seemed* so. Which is why John says so much about Jesus actually taking our flesh, lived and dwelt with us. The Ebionites said that Jesus was just a man, who was then *adopted* by God and made into the Messiah. They too could not accept the full divinity of Christ. Arianism taught that Christ was god (small g) but not of the same order as the ultimate God. There was a time when Christ did not exist, *he had a beginning*, and was the highest of the order of *created beings*. Such a view again strikes at the full and eternal divinity of Jesus. Some groups that still believe this today, and indeed some of the church pioneers held to some form of Arian view.

The heart of true belief is that Jesus is "mighty God, everlasting Father:" God made manifest in Christ.

6. Playing God

Texts: Isaiah 13-14; 24-27

Quotes:

- Many a humble agnostic, worshipping an unknown God, is nearer to the Kingdom of God than is a theologian confident in his theology Many an 'atheist' is rejecting false conceptions of God which he assumes to be Christian beliefs about Him. Many an agnostic has a reverence for the unknown God which puts to shame the pride of a superficial dogmatist. *Frederic Greeves*
- It is absurd for the Evolutionist to complain that it is unthinkable for an admittedly unthinkable God to make everything out of nothing and then pretend that it is more thinkable that nothing should turn itself into anything. *G K Chesterton*

Introductory questions

In what ways was Lucifer 'playing God'? In what ways do we follow his example? How can we avoid falling in to such self-serving traps? What *are* the issues at the heart of the great controversy as revealed in this passage in Isaiah? How did Lucifer think to make himself like the Most High? In so doing, what misunderstandings did he reveal about the nature of God?

Discussion ideas

This section of Isaiah (13:1) identifies Babylon as the enemy of Judah, and continues the great controversy theme with Lucifer under the symbol of the king of Babylon. With prophetic insight Isaiah also mentions the Medes as attacking Babylon (13:17). There is much again that speaks of wrath and anger, of violence and bloodshed. Why is this?

For all its pride, Babylon will be destroyed and become a desert place. For Judah (remaining after the loss of Israel to the Assyrians), this is a cause for rejoicing. Much of this message seems very nationalistic. Yet God puts his message of redemption into the historical and cultural context. However behind all this the whole of the universe-wide conflict is still playing out... In chapters 24-27 is a apocalyptic vision of disaster and destruction; yet the message is that God is still in control and will ultimately redeem those who choose him. (chapter 27 end).

But the most significant aspects are the insights into the origins of evil and the heart of the controversy that still rages. The king of Babylon is the image, yet there is much here that cannot refer to any human being. While the "taunt" has human aspects, the use of the words "morning star" (14:12) refers to the "light-bringer" Lucifer.

The question is of course, what light? Lucifer claimed to have a better way, more light, than God. His desire to be like the Most High revealed that in fact he had a very warped concept of the true nature and character of God. He obviously desired the power and ability, but not the true character of God. His desire was to "ascend," when God in his humility is the one who comes down to all his creation. In Isaiah 14:13, 14 the word "I" occurs five times, illustrating the self-centered perspective that Lucifer had. That is why Ellen White writes that "Sin originated in self-seeking." In looking to selfish benefit, in placing self first, in making decisions from a self-referenced perspective, Lucifer denied the fundamental principle of God's selfless love.

Lucifer refused to admit any error; he continued in his rebellion against the only one who could save him from himself; and eventually placed himself beyond even God's ability to help and to save. Lucifer is brought down by his own self-centered actions that lead to self-destruction.

Ellen White Comments

Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world. {DA 21-22}

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” Ezekiel 28:17. “Thou hast said in thine heart, . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High.” Isaiah 14:13, 14. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone. {PP 35}

Extra Material

In a recent compilation of ideas about God, most gave the problem of suffering and evil as the main reason they rejected God. He is either not there, or if he is, then he acts as a terribly cruel tyrant and consequently is not worth knowing anyway.

But there is another, far more comprehensive and valid answer. One that does justice to reason, and which puts God in a good light. The only way of understanding why.

Consider. You are God (hard, but try!) Rebellion has broken put in your Universe. The Number One of your created beings has decided to set himself up in opposition to you. You could easily dispose of this trouble-maker by blowing him away--literally!

Now if you are a tyrant, who rules by force and cruelty, such a violent act poses no problems. But if you are as God says he is--a God of love who wants trusting love from his children--then you must think again. For even if the Rebel deserves such a fate, how will your other created beings see your killing him? Difficult.

Especially when the Rebel has clearly stated that you are a vindictive and arbitrary dictator, who would just love the opportunity to start zapping his children with death rays! How can you deal with such charges of being unloving, merciless and dictatorial and show yourself to be a truly loving Father? How can you make sure your created children worship you from love and not fear? Only by fully demonstrating your true character, and allowing the Rebel to demonstrate what he is really like--and what his way leads to.

Lucifer, the Light-Bringer, chose to rebel against God, to set himself up above God (see Ezekiel 28:12-17 and Isaiah 14:12-15.). He accused God of everything evil—that he was harsh and legalistic, an unloving selfish Being who ruled the Universe through fear. That is, the Devil accused God of being just like the Devil!

To answer these charges God permitted the Devil to work out his evil program, so that everyone may know where such rebellion leads. So that all may see God as he truly is, God came to this world. Jesus revealed God, and showed us the way back to him. (see John 17:3; 14:9).

7. Defeat the Assyrians

Texts: Isaiah 36-39

Quotes:

- Right is right even if nobody does it. Wrong is wrong even if everybody is wrong about it. *G K Chesterton*
- Properly read, the Bible is the most potent force for atheism ever conceived. *Isaac Asimov*
- Murderous viciousness, treachery, cruelty, deceitfulness, and arrogance are common characteristics of the Biblical God. No man of ordinary good morals could be even a fraction as vicious, murderous, or vengeful as the Christian God, according to the book reputed to be His divine revelation. *James Hervev Johnson*
- Ultimately, if God exists, he has no one to blame for atheism but himself. *Norm R. Allen*

Introductory questions

How does God deal with warring nations? What is the lesson here? Does the direct challenge to God by the Assyrian spokesman have an impact on what happened? Were all the 185,000 Assyrians bad people? Did they deserve death? What was wrong in Hezekiah's display to the Babylonian visitors? What's the application of these stories to us? How does God look?

Discussion ideas

“The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold, / And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold; / And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea/ When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.... And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail, / And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal; / And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword, /Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!” *George Gordon, Lord Byron*

Byron's poem commemorates this story, an example of praise for divine intervention—in this case God's disposal of multiplied thousands of the enemy. But while for the people of Jerusalem, the actions of God in killing 185,000 Assyrians was a clear sign of divine favor, what of the larger implications? How does God look? How does this relate to the commandment, “Thou shalt not kill?” What impact does this have on God's reputation?

An in-depth reading of the story reveals that more is going on than first meets the eye. More than a conflict between nations, this is a direct attack on the nature and power of God himself. While God does not always choose to defend himself, in this instance he chooses to display his power as a way of trying to convince various sets of rebellious people that he is to be listened to. Again the great controversy perspective must not be lost sight of—for God is very much involved in this human conflict, and is seeking to win enough time and respect to be taken seriously—by his people as well as by the arrogant Assyrians.

Just as an aside, it's interesting to note that Isaiah records that while Sennacherib is worshiping his god, then he's murdered by his sons. Obviously his god was not able to protect him, is the inference here. In a culture that viewed a god's reputation by his ability to gain battle victories and personal protection, the true God often had to work at a very basic human level.

Hezekiah's miracle, and then his later failure to witness wisely, reveals that God still works with us, even knowing our faults and failings, and even our future mistakes!

Ellen White Comments

The long-expected crisis finally came. The forces of Assyria, advancing from triumph to triumph, appeared in Judea. Confident of victory, the leaders divided their forces into two armies, one of which was to meet the Egyptian army to the southward, while the other was to besiege Jerusalem.

Judah's only hope was now in God. All possible help from Egypt had been cut off, and no other nations were near to lend a friendly hand.

The Assyrian officers, sure of the strength of their disciplined forces, arranged for a conference with the chief men of Judah, during which they insolently demanded the surrender of the city. This demand was accompanied by blasphemous revilings against the God of the Hebrews. Because of the weakness and apostasy of Israel and Judah, the name of God was no longer feared among the nations, but had become a subject for continual reproach. See Isaiah 52:5. {PK 352}

When Sennacherib, the haughty Assyrian, reproached and blasphemed God, and threatened Israel with destruction, "it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand." There were "cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains," from the army of Sennacherib. "So he returned with shame of face to his own land." 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 32:21. {GC 511}

Extra material

I am the Rab Shekah, the Assyrian army's chief commander. As Emperor Sennacherib's right-hand-man, I have to know what I'm doing. The Great King relies on me. While I would be executed immediately if he wished, I do what he wants, and get results.

The only successful method is brute force. That way you get respect in this world. You can't argue with an Assyrian army! The most feared weapon in the world! A reputation for extreme violence and cruelty helps too—terror wins the war for you.

Now we are dealing with Judah. They must have a death wish, rebelling against us after promising to be our vassals. Well, we can answer their wish well enough. Lachish, and almost all their other cities are in our hands. Cities?—as if you can call them that. If you saw great Nineveh, our capital city, you would see these places are just like villages in comparison. Their king Hezekiah has tried to pay us off, but this time we're deadly serious. Submit or die!

"Why are you bothering to resist," I asked them. "You can't win against us. Look at what you have on your side. Nothing! You have no military strength, and if you're thinking the king of Egypt is going to come to your rescue—think again! He's like a broken reed that if you use it as a walking stick to lean on will jab splinters in your hand. And if you're thinking that Yahweh god of yours will save you—forget it. Isn't he the one whose high places and temples Hezekiah destroyed, saying you could only worship at the temple in Jerusalem? An offended god! Look—I'll even give you 2000 horses if you could find riders for them! Some hope! Anyway, it's your god Yahweh who told me to come and destroy you anyway. This god Yahweh didn't help the Israelites just twenty years ago, and he won't help you people in Jerusalem now.

So we're making ready. Long siege or brutal attack—whichever way, we'll win. We always do. I got some report that Hezekiah was desperate, laying out lord Sennacherib's letter before his god Yahweh, praying for this pitiful, weak god to help. How futile! In the morning, you'll see. The whole world will see. Then everyone will know I'm right.

The Rab Shekah and 184,999 other Assyrian soldiers never wake up.

8. “Comfort My People”

Texts: Isaiah 40.

Quotes:

- I fear that many people seek to hear God solely as a device for securing their own safety, comfort and righteousness. For those who busy themselves to know the will of God, however, it is still true that “those who want to save their life will lose it.” My extreme preoccupation with knowing God’s will for me may only indicate, contrary to what is often thought, that I am overconcerned with myself, not a Christlike interest in the well-being of others or in the glory of God. *Dallas Willard*
- “...I don’t want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness, I want sin.” *Aldous Huxley, “Brave New World”*

Introductory questions

What is the source of the comfort Isaiah was told to bring to his people? What kind of God is being described here? Why is this important, and why does Isaiah spend so much time in the description of God? What are the fundamental issues? Despite the wonderful depiction of God here in Isaiah, what is still missing?

Discussion ideas

This chapter illustrates why Isaiah has been termed the “gospel prophet.” In beautiful language Isaiah sets out in summary the desire of God to save his wayward and rebellious children, to give them comfort and joy, and to experience life to the full (see also John 10:10).

God’s first thought is to want to comfort his people. He recognizes that we are “like grass.” His message is one of “good tidings.” He wants to carry us close to his heart like lambs. God is incomparable. So no idol could ever be sufficient. He names the stars he has created. He wants to be our hope and source of strength so we can fly like eagles.

Yet once again the issue, though of wonderful benefit for us, is that the true comfort that comes from God is not some emotional reassurance but the evidence that answers the questions raised in the great controversy. The truth is that we have comfort because God is the kind of God he is. Otherwise there really is no comfort—certainly not in a punitive and vengeful God who inflicts pain and violence, or who seeks some legal satisfaction etc.

Nor is God one who is uncaring about us and our situation, which is why he came at such great cost to settle the arguments and to win us back to love and to trust. Yet even here in Isaiah we still miss seeing God’s love in practical action, which is why it was so important that he come in person. Only through Jesus do we see God in all his fullness.

The lesson speaks much about the “roadwork” necessary for a relationship with God. What positive and negative aspects spring to mind with this image? While aspects of preparation are certainly important, one essential gospel emphasis is to come to God just as we are...

While our own salvation is of course of great importance to ourselves personally, is not the whole perspective of the great controversy more important? Isaiah, and the Bible, are particularly directed to the human situation, but we must not lose sight of the cosmic aspect.

Ellen White Comments

Isaiah saw Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem amid the praises and rejoicing of the people. His prophetic words are eloquent in their simplicity. [Isa. 40:9-11 quoted.] Inspiration is revealed in this record of Christ's work. These closing chapters of the book of Isaiah should be diligently studied; for they are full of the gospel of Christ. They reveal to us that Israel was fully instructed in regard to the coming Saviour (MS 151, 1899). {4BC 1144-5}

In Christ is the tenderness of the shepherd, the affection of the parent, and the matchless grace of the compassionate Saviour. His blessings He presents in the most alluring terms. He is not content merely to announce these blessings; He presents them in the most attractive way, to excite a desire to possess them. So His servants are to present the riches of the glory of the unspeakable Gift. The wonderful love of Christ will melt and subdue hearts, when the mere reiteration of doctrines would accomplish nothing. "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God." {DA826}

Many were the messages of comfort given the church by the prophets of old. "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people" (Isaiah 40:1), was Isaiah's commission from God; and with the commission were given wonderful visions that have been the believers' hope and joy through all the centuries that have followed. Despised of men, persecuted, forsaken, God's children in every age have nevertheless been sustained by His sure promises. {PK 722-3}

Extra material

I walked out into the flawless beauty of a spring morning. Down the lanes into the dark-earthed fields, beside the fresh green of new-leaved trees, past yellow flowers shining like stars in the thorn hedges. I breathed in the perfection of all I saw, wanting to say 'thank you' again and again. Out of the corner of my eye I caught a quick movement among the grass. I went over to the roadside and looked. A beautiful bird peeked out at me from under a clump of weeds: bright yellow head and chest that made think of canaries, chestnut-brown back, tail trimmed neatly in white. A male yellowhammer. He looked so bright and smart that I smiled. Then I noticed one of his wings drooping awkwardly—it didn't look broken, only sprained. He started calling frantically, frightened of this monster, and tried to get away.

I put out my hand to pick him up, speaking softly. But he would have none of it. Struggling desperately he ran into the long grass and tried to hide. He didn't want any help, he only wanted to get away. So I tried again. And again. Every time he'd let me get just so close before running away as fast as he could. I began to get frustrated, and wondered whether he was playing some game with me. I was only trying to help—I wasn't doing this for my own benefit.

So I told him straight: "Look, I'm only thinking of you. Just let me pick you up and see what's wrong. I might be able to help." No use! I cajoled. I pleaded. I commanded. But every time I came close he was off, scurrying among the grass. At last he ran out of hiding places. He emerged from cover at the edge of a water-filled ditch. "OK" I said, "That's enough running. Now just let me pick you up gently. I won't hurt." But no. He launched himself into the air, and fluttered painfully across to the other side. He only just made it, trailing his legs in the water as he landed. He refused to trust me, rejected my help—he only wanted to get away from me.

Now he may have good reasons. Perhaps he couldn't see that I intended good. He wasn't sure what I was doing, didn't understand exactly what was going on, wanted to be "free". But whatever the case, he lost out. For a bird with a sprained wing can't go very far. By putting himself beyond my reach he showed he didn't trust me and doomed himself to die. And I felt in a very small way what a caring God must feel when those he loves fly away from him forever.

9. To Serve and to Save

Texts: Isaiah 41-49.

Quotes:

- Sometimes I think we're alone in the universe. Sometimes I think we're not. In both cases the thought is equally shocking. *Arthur C. Clarke*
- It is an insult to God to believe in God. For on the one hand it is to suppose that he has perpetrated acts of incalculable cruelty. On the other hand, it is to suppose that he has perversely given his human creatures an instrument -- their intellect -- which must inevitably lead them, if they are dispassionate and honest, to deny his existence. It is tempting to conclude that if he exists, it is the atheists and agnostics that he loves best, among those with any pretensions to education. For they are the ones who have taken him most seriously. *Galen Strawson*
- Give God the margin of eternity to justify himself. *H. R. Haweis*

Introductory questions

Why is Jesus identified as the “suffering servant”? What does this mean? How does Isaiah and then Jesus represent God? How does the aspect of prophetic insight work—and what are its implications? What relevance is there for us today in the attacks on idol worship? How does this material speak of God and of the issues involved in the cosmic conflict?

Discussion ideas

The latter part of Isaiah (from chapter 40 on) is described by some as deuterio- or second Isaiah, written by a different author. While there are some stylistic arguments given, the main reason is that clear references (for example Cyrus in chapter 45) are given to future events. Because some dismiss such prophetic principles, and argue that the material must have been written after the event, they believe in a later author.

But if the Bible is really about God, why should such passages be problematic? It is only because of a preconception that such ideas are entertained. Accepting the foreknowledge of God, and that he has revealed some of this to his prophets, we see that God continues to work for his people, and provide sufficient evidence to believe.

There are several references to idols in these chapters. The significance is in the meaning given to such representations. For they “profit nothing” and are “utterly worthless.” Anything that replaces God as the primary focus of life is also found to be utterly worthless. Only God can save; only God can give the answers to the most important questions.

The servant imagery of Isaiah 42 represents Christ. In following God's will (note Jesus' comments about this during his life), Jesus is not putting himself into the role of an unthinking, uncaring servant/slave, but in a lower role as we are. This is not to encourage “servant talk,” but to explain Jesus' condescension to come here as one of us to reveal God in a way we can see.

Most of all, these chapters help us see God, once again trying to work for his people, looking to seek and to save that which was lost. God is providing the evidence; helping his children see that there is sufficient reason to believe. God is working to show that he is one to be trusted, not the foolish idols that we choose to believe in. It's interesting that we feel we have to believe in something, and even atheism is defined by the God that is not believed in. The goal is to see God as he is, working for all of his fallen children, working to win them back to himself.

Ellen White Comments

Jesus is our example. There are many who dwell with interest upon the period of His public ministry, while they pass unnoticed the teaching of His early years. But it is in His home life that He is the pattern for all children and youth. The Saviour condescended to poverty, that He might teach how closely we in a humble lot may walk with God. He lived to please, honor, and glorify His Father in the common things of life. His work began in consecrating the lowly trade of the craftsmen who toil for their daily bread. He was doing God's service just as much when laboring at the carpenter's bench as when working miracles for the multitude. And every youth who follows Christ's example of faithfulness and obedience in His lowly home may claim those words spoken of Him by the Father through the Holy Spirit, "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth." Isa. 42:1. {DA 74}

[Isa. 42:1, 2 quoted.] He [Christ] will not be like the teachers of His day. The ostentation and show and parade of piety revealed in the priests and Pharisees is not His way. [Isa. 42:3, 4 quoted.] Christ saw the work of the priests and rulers. The very ones who needed help, the afflicted, the distressed, were treated with words of censure and rebuke, and He forbore to speak any word that would break the feeble reed. The dimly burning wick of faith and hope, He would encourage, and not quench. He would feed His flock like a shepherd; He would gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom (MS 151, 1899). {4BC 1146}

The more we think about Christ's becoming a babe here on earth, the more wonderful it appears. How can it be that the helpless babe in Bethlehem's manger is still the divine Son of God? Though we cannot understand it, we can believe that He who made the worlds, for our sakes became a helpless babe. Though higher than any of the angels, though as great as the Father on the throne of heaven, He became one with us. In Him God and man became one, and it is in this fact that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in the flesh, we look upon God in humanity, and see in Him the brightness of divine glory, the express image of God the Father (Selected Messages, book 3, pp. 127, 128). {LHU 75}

Extra material

The depersonalization/repersonalization of deity and humanity

1) Human level:

a) How we depersonalize each other—brutalization of humanity.

Group social processes--mob psychology. Viewer and participants. All name-calling/objectifying. Making people things. (Brave New World babies).

b) How we dehumanize ourselves—self-degradation.

2) Divine level.

The God that man creates. Made in the image of ourselves. Degraded and made like some *thing*.

3) The repersonalization of God. God as he is—as demonstrated by Christ. Excursus into what Jesus came to show. How this shows what God is really like. Character of God as personality.

4) The repersonalization of ourselves. How God remakes us in his image, how we are repersonalized by God. God's re-creating of us as we always were meant to be.

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