

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2024: *Themes in the Gospel of John*

Lesson 2 “Signs of Divinity”

Read for this week’s study

John 6:1–15; Isaiah 53:4–6; 1 Corinthians 5:7; John 6:26–36; John 9:1–41; 1 Corinthians 1:26–29; John 11.

Memory Text

“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).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Feeding of the Five Thousand
- III. “Surely, He Is the Prophet”
- IV. The Healing of the Blind Man: Part 1
- V. The Healing of the Blind Man: Part 2
- VI. The Resurrection of Lazarus
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. For the Jews, there is only one God, Yahweh, and there is a clear line drawn between that God and the creation. God alone is above that line, and everything below that line is creature. There is no mingling of the two. What is it that puts God above the line and everyone(thing) else below the line? The Jews identified four ways in which the Creator is completely distinct from the creation. 1) God is the sole creator of the universe. 2) God is the sole ruler of the universe. God may delegate assistants (like Adam) to rule or create in His behalf, but God is ultimately responsible for the creation and the governance of the creation. 3) God has a unique name, Yahweh. 4) God, and God alone, is worthy of worship. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. The early Christians were all Jews. So they retained the belief in one God. Yet they became convinced that in Jesus the Messiah, they were face to face with God in the

- flesh. Yet they did not come to see Jesus as a “second God”. What they did was to include Jesus in their understanding of the one God of Judaism. This is evident when one compares 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 with the Shema (the fundamental Jewish statement of faith, Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Paul includes both the Father and Jesus in the Shema. How is this affirmed in John 1:1-3? The very earliest Christians, therefore, affirmed the full Godhood of Jesus Christ without giving up the one God concept of Judaism. Thought question: Why is the divinity of Christ important? What would Christian faith lose without it? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
3. The divinity of Jesus Christ is a major theme in the Gospel of John. One of the places where the divinity of Jesus is emphasized is the story of the feeding of the 5000 and the events that follow. Read John 6:1-14. What parallels do you see in this story between Jesus and Moses? (Sunday’s Lesson)
 4. Read John 6:14-15. How did the people respond to the feeding miracle? Why does Jesus’ reject this seemingly positive response? What about their intention didn’t sit right with Jesus? Read John 6:26-36. How does Jesus use the feeding miracle to teach the people more about who He really is? What is the significance of the statement: “I AM the bread of life”? (Monday’s Lesson)
 5. Read Exodus 3:13-15. What is the meaning of the name God applies to Himself in response to Moses’ request? Read John 6:35. In light of Exodus, what is Jesus saying? What is the background of Jesus’ I AM statements in the Old Testament prophets? (Monday’s Lesson)
 6. Read John 9:1-16. What does Jesus say about the relation between sickness and sin? How does this perspective fit with some of the stories of the Old Testament? See 2 Kings 5:15-27; 2 Chronicles 26:16-21. (Tuesday’s Lesson)
 7. Read John 9:17-34. What questions did the religious leaders ask and how did the blind man’s faith grow as the dialogue continued? This is the only part of the Gospel where Jesus is not the central figure. (Wednesday’s Lesson)
 8. Read John 11:1-6. Why did Jesus delay going to Lazarus? Read John 11:25-26 and 38-44. How did Jesus’ actions provide evidence that He was who He claimed to be? (Thursday’s Lesson)
 9. How is it that even in the face of powerful evidence people can still choose to reject God? (Friday’s Lesson)
 10. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-29. What are some of the “foolish things” that Christians believe, things that the “wise according to the flesh” mock and reject? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

What is your favorite verse to show that Christ is divine? Now some have used this one, might be best not to make this the major verse. What's the strongest text you can think of to show that the one who came to this earth was none other than God? John 1:1 is mentioned. Now, of course, our Jehovah's Witness friends do interesting things with John 1:1, don't they?

"In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God." We say. And when our Witness friends come by the door they like to say, "Now in the Greek it doesn't say the Word was God" the word was a, little g, god. Now, that's not very good Greek but they make that point very strongly. And so it becomes a source of considerable argument sometimes. The better translation is "the Word was God", to be sure.

What I've found most useful is Hebrews, in Hebrews 1. One reason for mentioning this tonight is that tying Hebrews 1 in with Romans 1 that we discussed awhile ago, I think it's a very strong argument for the divinity of Christ. Hebrews 1 that begins: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us not by prophets, but by a son." In fact, the Greek is not the son but by a son as compared with prophets. But who is the son who came?

To what angel [verse 5] did God ever say, "Thou art my son today I have begotten thee"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"? And again when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

God asked the angels to worship His son. What about those who believe that the son was a created being? Does Paul say anything about those who worship a created being? Do you remember in Romans 1? What about those who turn from the truth and worship a creature rather than the creator. Romans 1:24, it's one of the explanations as to why God has given people up, for they won't respond to the truth. Romans 1:25 says, "He gives them up because they have exchanged the truth about God for a lie and have worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forevermore."

And sometimes with our good Witness friends, I like to ask what their attitude is toward Christ, do they worship Him? If He's a created being they shouldn't, right? And some of them say very sincerely, "Well, we don't worship Christ because one should not worship a created being." Then you turn over to Hebrews 1, the verse we just read, God said to His angels, even, that they should worship the Son. Then if God told the angels to worship the Son, that surely was recognizing the Son as God, not a created being, but the creator Himself. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 9, recorded December 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:* <http://pkp.cc/17MMROMANS66>

If the one who came was not really God, then all we've said goes down the drain. Do you mean he was the first-born of all creation? Then we don't know about God. Someone very kind was willing to come, or maybe he made him come, to clear up these matters. What do you do with the "first-born of all creation"? I'd really want to put with that verse 18, "He's the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead." First-born, "that in everything he might be pre-eminent." Is that how he's first-born? First-born doesn't mean the first one born, necessarily, but the first in position, in rank, and in authority.

For example, Isaac was Abraham's first-born, his only-begotten son. But he'd had a boy before, hadn't he? But he didn't inherit the estate. So this is in that sense of rank and position. Isn't this whole passage here in Colossians 1 to the effect that the one who came has never had a beginning. He's the first. He's the creator of all things. And didn't John say the same? Nothing was created without him. And Hebrews 1 is going to say God told the angels to worship him, and you don't worship a created being.

And I think that Paul's great concern here in Colossians is that the one who came to clear up all the questions about God was God himself, or our questions have not really been answered. Because our questions are not about the second in command. They're not about an angel. Our questions are about God. So those who believe that someone less than God came have either different questions or they don't have the answers.

But if we really want to know about God, what God is really like, then it would mean everything in the world to believe and understand that the one who came to this earth and walked among us was that God. And so, when Jesus was here, and we realize it's God, and you watch him treat sinners so graciously, did anybody intercede with Jesus to forgive somebody? No. Nobody had to plead with him to forgive, ever. It was in his heart to forgive. No one had to plead with him. But somebody has to plead with the Father, right? If Jesus is fully God, as emphasized in all these passages, and nobody had to intercede with him, then we know no one has to intercede with God. And yet they weren't getting that point. And so Jesus had to say, in John 16:26, "You know that if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. And you realize the implications of this? There's no need for me to intercede with the Father when I get up there, for the Father's just like me. In fact, I am God."

What about Isaiah 9:6? What are the names of the Son, but the "everlasting Father, the almighty God," you remember? So on this earth, the angels saw God, "than whom there is none greater," treating people the way he did. And nobody had to plead with Jesus to forgive. So if we suggest somebody needs to plead with the Father but not with the Son, we've driven a wedge between the two, or we suggest; maybe, the Son is not fully God. Whatever God did for sinners, I mean God the Son, God the Father would do, for they are equally God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Ephesians and Colossians,

recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/68MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: Take some of the other things such as the feeding of the five thousand or the feeding of the four thousand a little bit later. And that's recorded in all the Gospels, I believe. Certainly, it made an impact on the writers of the Gospels and on the people. They were ready, if I remember it correctly—with the feeding of the five thousand—weren't they ready to crown Him King right at that time?

Graham: That's right! Now this illustrates the point superbly. Because He realized that huge crowds were following Him for the miracles, and that's all. And so you remember, He told them something very serious, meaning, "Unless you really accept Me and My teachings you will not be saved." And they all left Him.

Lou: That's true.

Graham: Yes, all they wanted was free food and free healing.

And so then He turned to the twelve and said, (some translations say) "Do you also wish to go?" The Greek is extraordinary. There is a way of asking a question that gives the question yes or no. Be wonderful to use for exams here in the University; every question has the answer on the front. But the way it's worded in the Greek, Jesus said, "You don't want to go too, do you?" And they said, "No; to whom else should we go? You have the words of eternal life." They weren't entirely convinced; there was so much they didn't understand. But at least they chose to stay. He must have wondered then whether it was worth coming. How much of a following had He won? Only when He performed miracles did He get a crowd, and He did not wish to get a crowd from the performance of miracles. Doesn't it say something though, that when He won a following by miracle, He turned them away. And that is the wrong reason for power. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7 with Lou Venden, "The Question of Authority" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>

Think of the picture of God in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Not that it was new. The whole Old Testament had born witness to this truth about God. Look at Jeremiah's picture, and Isaiah, and Hosea, and Amos, and Micah, and others in the Old Testament. But now Jesus has come, and has clearly demonstrated, at risk of life, the truth about our heavenly Father. And you think of what the disciples are now privileged to take out to the world. Now they knew what God was

like. They were not that clear when Jesus began, were they? You remember they asked Him, “Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” And, “Do You wish that fire would come down from heaven and consume Your adversaries?” They didn’t know God that well.

But they had been together in the upper room and heard Jesus say, “If you have seen Me, you’ve seen the Father. And there’s no need for Me to intercede with the Father for you, for the Father loves you Himself. And in the judgment, you’ll actually just be judged by the truth. That’s all. Nothing arbitrary about it.” And they’d seen Him feed the hungry, and heal the sick, and cry at the funeral of one of His friends, and all those things. And now they were to go out and spread the good news. You’d think the world would be thrilled, but it was no more thrilled to hear them than it was to hear Christ.

In fact, from whom did the strongest opposition come? Hasn’t that always been the history? Yes, God’s professed people opposed this picture. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Now we must, in Mark particularly, next time, note Jesus’ observance of the Sabbath, and the trouble He got into when He allowed them to eat on the Sabbath in a certain way, and He healed on the Sabbath. Why did He get into trouble? Remember the rules in the *Mishnah*. He was breaking those rules. “Why,” He said, “I never gave you those rules. These are commandments of men, learned by rote,” quoting Isaiah. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Intertestament Period & Matthew, recorded March 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/51MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/52MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: The raising of Lazarus. Dead for four days! Isn’t that outstanding evidence of authority? Wouldn’t you believe just on the basis of that performance?

Graham: We call that His crowning miracle, don’t we? And yet it’s significant that Elijah had resurrected the dead before. It was not that unusual. Well, it wasn’t unique anyway. I think it’s the total situation within which He did this thing. For example, He had just been crying awhile before. He wept. And they said, “Behold, how He loves him.” The gentleness of Jesus is what

was disappointing so many of His followers. But then He demonstrated that He can resurrect the dead. And the theologians knew what this implied. And that's why it says, "From then on, they plotted to murder Him." Because they realized that step by step He was demonstrating beyond question that He was the infinitely powerful but equally gracious One who fitted the Old Testament description.

More than that, He had the wisdom to wait until the fourth day, and they must have realized it. And the wisdom with which He did things. He didn't display His erudition to be sure, but He knew that they had questioned His resurrection of Jairus' daughter before. And so this time He waited until the fourth day, because some of them believed that the spirit hovered nearby for three days in case of resuscitation. So He waited until the fourth day until the most skeptical person in His audience would admit that this time Lazarus was really dead. And then, when He said, "Roll away the stone," He wanted to hear them say, "Don't roll it away," an important key text, "he stinks." Because they would all admit that he really was dead. "Now," He said, "come forth." They had no answer for that. And when you've run out of evidence, then you turn to violence. And they tried to kill Him.

Lou: So that did not serve to convince them.

Graham: No, it actually turned them against Him all the more.

Lou: It sealed His death, His doom.

Graham: Yes. But to some of us—that God could one minute be crying and the next minute He's resurrecting the dead; now that sounds good to me.

Lou: Satan went about to plot Lazarus' death.

Graham: That's right; get rid of the evidence. Here's Lazarus going around explaining his death and resurrection. They didn't like that testimony. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7 with Lou Venden, "The Question of Authority" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

From all eternity Christ was united with the Father, and when He took upon Himself human nature, He was still one with God. He is the link that unites God with humanity [Hebrews 2:14 quoted] (ST Aug. 2, 1905). {5BC 1115.1}

Christ could have done nothing during His earthly ministry in saving fallen man if the divine had not been blended with the human. The limited capacity of man cannot define this wonderful

mystery—the blending of the two natures, the divine and the human. It can never be explained. Man must wonder and be silent. And yet man is privileged to be a partaker of the divine nature, and in this way he can to some degree enter into the mystery (Letter 5, 1889). {7BC 904.5}

At the Saviour's baptism, Satan was among the witnesses. He saw the Father's glory overshadowing His Son. He heard the voice of Jehovah testifying to the divinity of Jesus. Ever since Adam's sin, the human race had been cut off from direct communion with God; the intercourse between heaven and earth had been through Christ; but now that Jesus had come "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3), the Father Himself spoke. He had before communicated with humanity *through* Christ; now He communicated with humanity *in* Christ. Satan had hoped that God's abhorrence of evil would bring an eternal separation between heaven and earth. But now it was manifest that the connection between God and man had been restored. {DA 116.2}

But although Christ's divine glory was for a time veiled and eclipsed by His assuming humanity, yet He did not cease to be God when He became man. The human did not take the place of the divine, nor the divine of the human. This is the mystery of godliness. The two expressions "human" and "divine" were, in Christ, closely and inseparably one, and yet they had a distinct individuality. Though Christ humbled Himself to become man, the Godhead was still His own. His deity could not be lost while He stood faithful and true to His loyalty. Surrounded with sorrow, suffering, and moral pollution, despised and rejected by the people to whom had been intrusted the oracles of heaven, Jesus could yet speak of Himself as the Son of man in heaven. He was ready to take once more His divine glory when His work on earth was done. {5BC 1129.3}

We may believe that God is with us in every place, and in every trying hour we may hold fast that hand which has all power. {ML 336.3}

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all unto Me." {DA 626.1}

But the people were slow to learn the lesson. Accustomed as they had been in Egypt to material representations of the Deity, and these of the most degrading nature, it was difficult for them to conceive of the existence or the character of the Unseen One. In pity for their weakness, God gave them a symbol of His presence. "Let them make Me a sanctuary," He said; "that I may dwell among them." Exodus 25:8. {Ed 35.1}

Christ is the source of our life, the source of immortality. He is the tree of life, and to all who come to Him He gives spiritual life (RH Jan. 26, 1897). {7BC 989.8}

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. {SC 68.1}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. No man has seen God at any time except as He is revealed through Christ. {8T 265.2}

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ's own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world. {6T 55.1}

Christ was the originator of all the ancient gems of truth. Through the work of the enemy these truths had been displaced. They had been disconnected from their true position and placed in the framework of error. Christ's work was to readjust and establish the precious gems in the framework of truth. The principles of truth that had been given by Himself to bless the world had, through Satan's agency, been buried and had apparently become extinct. Christ rescued them from the rubbish of error, gave them a new, vital force, and commanded them to shine as precious jewels and stand fast forever. Christ Himself could use any of these old truths without borrowing the smallest particle, for He had originated them all. . . . {CTr 225.4}

Christ does not use force or compulsion in drawing people to Him. But while truth was being proclaimed, the hearts of those who professed to be children of God were barricaded against it, and those who had not been so highly privileged, those who were not clothed with the garment of self-righteousness, were drawn to Christ. Their minds were convinced and quickened into activity, and light and truth vibrated through the universe. . . . {CTr 245.4}

Satan was artful in presenting his side of the question. As soon as he found that one position was seen in its true character, he changed it for another. Not so with God. He could work with only one class of weapons,—truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not,—crookedness and deceit. {RH, March 9, 1886 par. 6}

God is the author of truth. He enlightens the darkened understanding and gives to the human mind power to grasp and comprehend the truths which He has revealed. {SL 49.1}

Christ seldom attempted to prove that truth is truth. He illustrated truth in all its bearings, and then left His hearers free to accept or reject it, as they might choose. He did not force anyone to believe. In the sermon on the mount He instructed the people in practical godliness, distinctly outlining their duty. He spoke in such a manner as to commend truth to the conscience. The power manifested by the disciples was revealed in the clearness and earnestness with which they expressed the truth. {Ev 171.1}

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship Him in spirit and in truth. Christ

revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature. Christ came to the world to sow it with truth. {FE 177.1}

Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, April 13, 1891. {1SM 43.2}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

Jesus employed no miraculous agency to compel men to believe in him. They were left to choose or reject him, of their own free will. No direct power was to force them into obedience, and destroy the free moral agency that God has given to man. {4Red 86.3}

To the believer, Christ is the resurrection and the life. In our Saviour the life that was lost through sin is restored; for He has life in Himself to quicken whom He will. He is invested with the right to give immortality. The life that He laid down in humanity, He takes up again, and gives to humanity. {DA 786.4}