

The Backstory: The Prologue

Sabbath afternoon, October 12

In speaking of His preexistence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him.

Christ's words were spoken with a quiet dignity and with an assurance and power that sent conviction to the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees. They felt the power of the message sent from heaven. God was knocking at the door of their hearts, entreating entrance.

He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. . . . He is the eternal, self-existent Son.

In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:12). The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life. "He that believeth in me," said Jesus, "though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." . . . Christ here looks forward to the time of His second coming. —*Lift Him Up*, p. 17.

"In him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men." It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. "I lay it down of myself," He said. In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ.

While bearing human nature, He [Christ] was dependent upon the Omnipotent for His life. In His humanity, He laid hold of the divinity of God; and this every member of the human family has the privilege of doing. —*Maranatha*, p. 302.

The cross, the cross of Calvary presented again and again, plainly dwelt upon in every discourse, will prove the life-healing balm, will reveal the beauty and excellence of virtue. Those who quibble over the authenticity of the Scriptures and question the authority of revelation will not be influenced. . . .

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" [John 17:3]. The eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us. This theme will quench unbelief; and yet, sad to say, Jesus has been dropped out of many, many discourses that have been preached by Seventh-day Adventist ministers. And why? Because these ministers had not Jesus abiding in their hearts by faith; they were not clothed with Christ's righteousness. —*The Voice in Speech and Song*, p. 315.

Sunday, October 13

In the Beginning— The Divine Logos

While God's Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding His preexistence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. From everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant, the One in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted Him, were to be blessed. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God. . . .

God and Christ knew from the beginning of the apostasy of Satan and of the fall of Adam through the deceptive power of the apostate. The plan of salvation was designed to redeem the fallen race, to give them another trial. Christ was appointed to the office of Mediator from the creation of God, set up from everlasting to be our substitute and surety. Before the world was made, it was arranged that the divinity of Christ should be enshrouded in humanity. "A body," said Christ, "hast thou prepared me." But He did not come in human form until the fullness of time had expired. Then He came to our world, a babe in Bethlehem. —*Lift Him Up*, p. 74.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. This was no robbery of God [Proverbs 8:22–27 quoted].

There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was One with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in light unapproachable and incomprehensible. —Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1126.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalm 90:2). "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Matthew 4:16). Here the pre-existence of Christ and the purpose of His manifestation to our world are presented as living beams of light from the eternal throne. "Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:1, 2). —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 248.

Monday, October 14

The Word Made Flesh

[Christ] voluntarily assumed human nature. It was His own act, and by His own consent. He clothed His divinity with humanity. He was all the while as God, but He did not appear as God. He veiled the demonstrations of Deity, which had commanded the homage, and called forth the admiration, of the universe of God. He was God while upon earth, but He divested Himself of the form of God, and in its stead took the form and fashion of a man. He walked the earth as a man. For our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. He laid aside His glory and His majesty. He was God, but the glories of the form of God He for a while relinquished. Though He walked among men in poverty, scattering His blessings wherever He went, at His word legions of angels would surround their Redeemer, and do Him homage. But He walked the earth unrecognized, unconfessed, with but few exceptions, by His creatures. —Ellen G. White *Comments, in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1126.

The apostle [John] exalted Christ before his brethren as the One by whom God had created all things and by whom He had wrought out their redemption. He declared that the hand that sustains the worlds in space, and holds in their orderly arrangements and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for them. . . .

The Son of God stooped to uplift the fallen. For this He left the sinless worlds on high, the ninety and nine that loved Him, and came to this earth to be “wounded for our transgressions” and “bruised for our iniquities.” Isaiah 53:5. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He knew what it meant to be hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He was a stranger and a sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women of today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth.” John 1:14. —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 471, 472.

Christ, the outshining of the Father’s glory, came to the world as its light. He came to represent God to men, and of Him it is written that He was anointed “with the Holy Ghost and with power,” and “went about doing good.” Acts 10:38. In the synagogue at Nazareth He said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” Luke 4:18, 19. —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 416.

Tuesday, October 15

Hearing or Not Hearing the Word

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

When He spoke these words, Jesus was in the court of the temple specially connected with the services of the Feast of Tabernacles. In the center of this court rose two lofty standards, supporting lampstands of great size. After the evening sacrifice, all the lamps were kindled, shedding their light over Jerusalem. This ceremony was in commemoration of the pillar of light that guided Israel in the desert, and was also regarded as pointing to the coming of the Messiah. At evening when the lamps were lighted, the court was a scene of great rejoicing. Gray-haired men, the priests of the temple and the rulers of the people, united in the festive dances to the sound of instrumental music and the chants of the Levites.

In the illumination of Jerusalem, the people expressed their hope of the Messiah's coming to shed His light upon Israel. But to Jesus the scene had a wider meaning. As the radiant lamps of the temple lighted up all about them, so Christ, the source of spiritual light, illumines the darkness of the world. Yet the symbol was imperfect. That great light which His own hand had set in the heavens was a truer representation of the glory of His mission. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 463.

Without the grace of Christ, the sinner is in a hopeless condition; nothing can be done for him; but through divine grace, supernatural power is imparted to the man, and works in mind and heart and character. It is through the impartation of the grace of Christ that sin is discerned in its hateful nature, and finally driven from the soul temple. It is through grace that we are brought into fellowship with Christ, to be associated with Him in the work of salvation. Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ's perfect obedience instead of the sinner's transgression and defection. When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then, according to His unfulfilling promises, God pardons his sin, and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his substitute and surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness. —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 366.

Wednesday, October 16

Reappearing Themes— Belief/Unbelief

“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” You are just as dependent upon Christ for all that you receive as is the weakest, poorest, and humblest soul. “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” A mere speculative belief amounts to nothing. Do you believe on the Son of God as your personal Saviour? Then if you believe with all your heart, God dwells in the soul, and the soul in God. You represent Jesus. Those who are in positions of trust are on test and trial, to see if they will be wise men in positions of trust, to reveal whether Christ is working in and through them, so that He can represent His character and express Himself in their words and actions toward His heritage, for whom He has given His own precious life. —*Lift Him Up*, p. 148.

It is not for lack of knowledge that God’s people are now perishing. They will not be condemned because they do not know the way, the truth, and the life. The truth that has reached their understanding, the light which has shone on the soul, but which has been neglected or refused, will condemn them. Those who never had the light to reject will not be in condemnation. What more could have been done for God’s vineyard than has been done? Light, precious light, shines upon God’s people; but it will not save them unless they consent to be saved by it, fully live up to it, and transmit it to others in darkness. God calls upon His people to act. It is an individual work of confessing and forsaking sins and returning unto the Lord that is needed. One cannot do this work for another. Religious knowledge has accumulated, and this has increased corresponding obligations. Great light has been shining upon the church, and by it they are condemned because they refuse to walk in it. If they were blind they would be without sin. But they have seen light and have heard much truth, yet are not wise and holy. Many have for years made no advancement in knowledge and true holiness. They are spiritual dwarfs. Instead of going forward to perfection, they are going back to the darkness and bondage of Egypt. Their minds are not exercised unto godliness and true holiness. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 123.

It is our privilege to stand with the light of heaven upon us. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. It was no easier for Enoch to live a righteous life than it is for us at the present time. The world in his time was no more favorable to growth in grace and holiness than it is now.

It was by prayer and communion with God that Enoch was enabled to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. We are living in the perils of the last days, and we must receive our strength from the same Source. We must walk with God. A separation from the world is required of us, for we cannot remain free from its pollution unless we follow the example of the faithful Enoch. —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 70.

Reappearing Themes—Glory

[In John 17,] Christ is not praying for the manifestation of the glory of human nature; for that human nature never had an existence in His pre-existence. He is praying to His Father in regard to a glory possessed in His oneness with God. His prayer is that of a mediator; the favor He entreats in the manifestation of that divine glory which was possessed by Him when He was one with God. Let the veil be removed, He says, and let My glory shine forth—the glory which I had with Thee before the world was. . . .

“Father,” He says, “I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am.” And then the Father declares, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” The heavenly host prostrate themselves before Him, and raise their song of triumph and joy. Glory encircles the King of heaven, and was beheld by all the heavenly intelligences. No words can describe the scene which took place as the Son of God was publicly reinstated in the place of honor and glory which He voluntarily left when He became a man.

And today Christ, glorified, and yet our brother, is our Advocate in the courts of heaven. —Ellen G. White *Comments, in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1146.*

Oh, what soul hunger and longing had Christ to save that which was lost! The body crucified upon the cross did not detract from His divinity, His power of God to save through the human sacrifice, all who would accept His righteousness. In dying upon the cross, He transferred the guilt from the person of the transgressor to that of the divine Substitute through faith in Him as his personal Redeemer. The sins of a guilty world, which in figure are represented as “red as crimson,” were imputed to the divine Surety. . . .

Divinity was doing its work while humanity was suffering from the hatred and revenge of a God-hating people, because Christ had acknowledged Himself the Son of God. . . .

In the prayer of the poor thief [on the cross], there was a note different from that which was sounding on every side; it was a note of faith, and it reached to Christ. The faith of the dying man in Him was as sweetest music in the ears of Christ. The glad note of redemption and salvation was heard amid His dying agonies. God was glorified in and through His Son. —*This Day With God, p. 236.*

Christ had finished the work that was given Him to do. He had glorified God on the earth. He had manifested the Father’s name. He had gathered out those who were to continue His work among men. And He said, “I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are.” “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; . . . I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.”

Thus in the language of one who has divine authority, Christ gives His elect church into the Father’s arms. As a consecrated high priest He intercedes for His people. As a faithful shepherd He gathers His flock under the shadow of the Almighty, in the strong and sure refuge. For Him there waits the last battle with Satan, and He goes forth to meet it. —*The Desire of Ages, p. 680.*

Friday, October 18

For Further Reading

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "Ye Are the Light of the World," pp. 38–44;

Selected Messages, "Self-Indulgent Will Scorn Faithful Ones," book 3, p. 400.