

### 3. The Reality of His Humanity (2Q 2008—The Wonder of Jesus)

**Biblical material:** Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:5; 3:16; Heb. 4:15, 16; 1 John 4:1-3, John 1:14.

#### Quotes

- I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history. *H.G. Wells*
- Jesus Christ is to me the outstanding personality of all time, all history, both as Son of God and as Son of Man. Everything he ever said or did has value for us today and that is something you can say of no other man, dead or alive. There is no easy middle ground to stroll upon. You either accept Jesus or reject him. *Sholem Asch*
- In his own lifetime Jesus made no impact on history. This is something that I cannot but regard as a special dispensation on God's part, and, I like to think, yet another example of the ironical humour which informs so many of his purposes. To me, it seems highly appropriate that the most important figure in all history should thus escape the notice of memoirists, diarists, commentators, all the tribe of chroniclers who even then existed. *Malcolm Muggeridge*
- He might be described as an underprivileged, working-class victim of political and religious persecution. *Prince Philip*

#### Questions

How can concepts of Jesus' humanity both help and hinder our understanding? How could a human being also be God? While we cannot truly understand how this is possible, why is this so important? How do we see Jesus' humanity in his life and experience, and what does this tell us? How are we to live?

#### Discussion

1 John 4:1-3 tells us to test the spirits, and not to simply believe because we're told to. We are also counseled to recognize the Spirit of God. The foundational principle is examination and determination—processes of the mind. So to those who say "don't think!" God says no! In fact the very humanity of Jesus is the point stressed in these verses, and a denial of this is identified with the spirit of antichrist.

Hebrews 4:15, 16 points to Jesus as our high priest who was human in his temptations like us. Of course, when you look at Jesus' temptations in the wilderness, they are temptations designed for his unique nature. For example, he was hungry (human), but could satisfy this hunger by turning stones into bread (divine).

Galatians 4:4 reminds us that God sent his son, *born of a woman*. To many in the Greek world, the idea of God taking material form was scandalous, since the spiritual world was not to be tainted by the evil physical world. But God endorses his physical world, marred by sin, and also endorses humanity, similarly marred.

1 Timothy 2:5 refers to the man Christ Jesus, while 1 Timothy 3:16 points to his appearance in "a body." These strong statements are to counter the Docetists who

believed that Jesus only “seemed” to take on a body, because they could not accept God actually becoming human—as John also describes in the first chapter of his gospel.

In all this discussion of the humanity of Jesus there are pitfalls to be avoided. One is that because Jesus acted in a certain way, we must do so too—an example kind of theology that misses the point that Jesus was unique. I do not have temptations to turn stones into bread, for example. Another is the emphasis on his humanity in suffering, as in the movie *The Passion if Christ*. It is not his suffering that saves us, it is his demonstration of how far he was prepared to go to demonstrate the full extent of his love. Yet another is to emphasize the human at the expense of the divine—to make him into a great moral teacher, which while true, is only a part of who he was, or to suggest that while a wonderfully good person, he was misguided in thinking he could save us etc.

### **Comment**

John 1 says the Word was God, and He’s the Creator; and the angels were told to worship Him because He is fully and equally God. But the significance of all that is that in these last days—that is, in John’s time in the 90’s—he’s saying that the Old Testament has indeed borne witness to the truth, and God has spoken in many and various ways, but now He has spoken to us Himself, for Jesus is God. And he’s the one who records the story, doesn’t he, of Thomas saying, “My Lord and my God?” That is really was God Who came...

Well, now that God is here, in Person, so humbly in human form, veiling the dazzling splendor of His divinity, that human beings might come to know Him without being consumed, for is this not the God that said to Moses, “No man can see My face and live?” And yet the reflected glory was so bright that he wore a veil out of consideration for the people. So He came humbly in human form. And of course when He got tired, and He got hungry, some thought, “That cannot be God.” And when He was on His knees washing a dozen pairs of dirty feet, Judas decided this definitely could not be God, for his “God” would not so humiliate himself. And yet to others of us, that is one of the most wonderful things God ever did. A Graham Maxwell, tape “*The Picture of God in All Sixty-Six*” tape “*John.*”

### **Ellen White Comments**

Jesus assumed humanity that he might meet humanity. He brings men under the transforming power of truth by meeting them where they are. He gains access to the heart by securing sympathy and confidence, making all feel that his identification with their nature and interest is complete. The truth came from his lips beautiful in its simplicity, yet clothed with dignity and power. What a teacher was our Lord Jesus Christ! How tenderly did he treat every honest inquirer after truth, that he might gain admission to his sympathies, and find a home in the heart. {SpTA03 17.2}

Jesus laid aside his royal robe and kingly crown to assume the garb of humanity. He stooped from the position of commander in the heavenly courts to become a servant. He clothed his divinity with humanity, that humanity might touch humanity. {RH, October 10, 1899}