

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**Second Quarter 2015: *The Book of Luke***  
**Lesson 3 “Who Is Jesus Christ?”**

**Read for this week’s study**

Luke 4:16–30; 6:5; Eph. 1:3–5; Luke 9:18–27; 2 Pet. 1:16–18.

**Memory Text**

“He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered and said, ‘The Christ of God’”  
(Luke 9:20, NKJV).

**Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide**

- I. Introduction
- II. Reactions to Jesus
- III. Son of God
- IV. Son of Man
- V. “The Christ of God”
- VI. The Transfiguration
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Moderator: Jon Paulien**

1. The core question of this lesson is “Who is Jesus Christ?” The question is raised by Jesus Himself in Luke 9:18-27. Please read the passage. Why would Jesus ask the disciples a question whose answer He already knew? What is the significance of the answer from the human perspective here on earth? How is that answer clarified when you look at the question from the perspective of the cosmic conflict (brought in view by the encounter with Satan in Luke 4:1-13?) Who was Jesus really and why did He come to this earth? (Sabbath Afternoon and Wednesday’s lessons)
2. Read Luke 4:16-30. Notice the sudden change in attitude on the part of the people. Why did their attitude change suddenly? How does John 3:18-21 help to explain this? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Luke 7:17-22. What was John’s question about Jesus and why would he have asked it? If Jesus was truly God and had access to all of God’s power, what was John doing in prison? How does the cross help answer this question? (Sunday’s lesson)
4. Read Luke 1:26-35 and 2:11. What do these passages tell us about who Jesus really is? Look up the meaning of the name “Jesus” and relate it to the various ways in

which Jesus is named in the above passages. Though Jesus is often called “Son of God” by the Father, angels, and demons, Jesus Himself never uses the phrase. Why not? (Monday’s lesson)

5. Fundamental Belief Number Two of the Seventh-day Adventist Church reads as follows: “Trinity (title). There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation.” At this very time, consideration is being given to dropping the word “trinity” because that word is not found in the Bible. But calling the godhead “persons” is also not found in the Bible. How closely should fundamental beliefs follow the wording of the Bible? What does this Fundamental, as it reads, tell us about God? (Monday’s lesson)
6. The lesson points out that while “Son of Man” was Jesus’ favorite name for Himself, the church almost never named Him in this way. Why do you think that was? What was it about the name “Son of Man” that made the term so attractive to Jesus? (Tuesday’s lesson)
7. What has your own personal knowledge of Jesus taught you about Him and about what He is like? What has it taught you about what God is like? (Wednesday’s lesson)
8. Read all three Gospel accounts of the Transfiguration (Luke 9:27-36; Matthew 17:1-9 and Mark 9:2-8). Read also Peter’s first-hand account of the incident in 2 Peter 1:16-18. What additional information does Luke provide compared to the others, and why is it important? Why do you think Moses and Elijah were chosen to meet with Jesus on this occasion? If Jesus went through dark times and needed comforting, what does that tell us about our own spiritual walk? (Thursday’s lesson)
9. C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* lays out three options with regard to Jesus, a man who claimed to be God. Such a man is either a deceiver, crazy (like a man who thinks he is a poached egg), or he is what he claims to be. What fourth option does Lewis not mention and why is that option so popular among many scholars? (Friday’s Lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

When John the Baptist was languishing in prison, he began to wonder if Jesus really was the Christ. He sent two of his disciples to Jesus with the question, “Are you the one who was to come or are we to look for somebody else?”

Did Jesus answer, “Indeed, I am the Christ. And I expect John to believe it”? Anyone could make this claim—even the devil himself. Only on the basis of evidence could John’s serious question be given a satisfactory reply.

So Jesus answered John's disciples, "Go and tell John what you hear and see—that blind men are recovering their sight, cripples are walking, lepers being healed, the deaf hearing, the dead being raised to life and the good news is being given to those in need. And happy is the man who never loses faith in me" (Matthew 11:3–6, Phillips). {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 66. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-07>

How could John tell that Jesus was the one? A little later on, when John was in prison, and he heard reports of Jesus' preaching, and you remember Jesus said that if you're a sheep rather than a goat, you'll visit the people in prison, did Jesus ever go and visit His cousin? He never went to see him. And perhaps John began to wonder. And he sent two emissaries to Christ. "Are you the one, or not?" You see, in spite of all that happened at Jordan, "are you the One, or not?" And did Jesus reply, "Yes, I am! And I expect you to believe it, if you have faith!" That could have been the devil making that claim. Anybody could make that claim. So, what did the two men do? Run right back to John and say, "He won't answer?" They spent the day with Him. And in the end they went back to John, and he said, "Well, did He say He is or not?"

"No."

"Then why didn't you come sooner?"

"We spent the day with Him."

"Well, sit down and tell me what you saw and what you heard."

And they described what they saw and heard. And the further they went, the more John was convinced that Jesus was the One. On what basis? Scripture, wasn't it? That's the accumulating evidence of the years. The One who came was in harmony with all the predictions before. And that's the better evidence, isn't it? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke*, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

The main thing here is: The One who came to this earth to reveal the Truth, the Good News about His Father, was none other than the Son of God. He was God. He was God before He came. He's been back in Heaven reigning as the Divine One, God. He was known to be God by the angels when He was here on this earth, but to us He looked like just a Son of David. He got tired. He got hungry. He fell asleep in the boat. He cried. And some people despised Him for His human weakness. But, to many of us that's an even greater, and more impressive, revelation of

the truth about God. The One who raised His voice on Sinai, knows He has to meet us where we are and speak a language we can understand. And He didn't come in all His blazing glory, in fact if He had, He would have consumed the very people He came to teach. So He came like one of us, so we'd not be afraid of Him. And He spoke a language we could understand. And think what He said about His Father. How trustworthy His Father is. How gentle, what a teacher He is. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 1, recorded September, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

Nineteen hundred years ago the Son of man came to this earth in human form to give us the clearest revelation of the truth about God that the universe will ever see. By the way that he lived and the way that he died he answered the questions, he met the accusations, he confirmed the truth—all with evidence that will stand for eternity.

He came to show how infinitely loving the Father is. He loved everyone, including little children. The disciples assumed that the Saviour was too busy to have time for boys and girls. But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them" (Matthew 19:14). He came to show how infinitely patient the Father is. He treated everyone with utmost courtesy and understanding, even though he was often rebuffed and insulted in return. One day the disciples asked if Jesus wanted them to call down fire from heaven to consume the rejecters of his love. The Lord rebuked them for their heartless impatience. He had not come to destroy but to heal (see Luke 9:55; 19:10).

Jesus came to show how every detail of our lives is of concern to the Father. In all the excitement following the raising of Jairus' daughter, it was he who directed that they be sure to give her something to eat (see Luke 8:49–56).

Then at the end of his matchless life there came the supreme demonstration of what God is like. On Thursday evening Jesus was arrested. He was illegally tried. He was falsely accused. He was grossly insulted. But not once did he become angry; for God is like that!

Twice he was horribly beaten. All night long he was allowed no sleep, no food. But did he become irritated? Not for a moment; for God is like that!

Men made a game of hitting his wounded head. They jeered at his mysterious birth as illegitimate. They even spat in his face. But did his patience run out? Did he become angry with his tormentors? Never! For God is like that.

Even as he hung on the cross, enduring the pain of crucifixion and the mocking of those he came to save—even as he passed through the unspeakable agony of separation from his

Father—he kept on praying, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

This is the kind of person we know our God to be. For the Father is just as loving and forgiving as the Son. As Jesus said, “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 80-82. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-08>

We know that He was not a sinner. He had appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration—in the unveiled glory of God—shortly before, hadn’t He? I used to wonder why that’s in the story. If Jesus had been in any respect out of harmony with His Father, what would have happened to Him? When He stood there in the unveiled glory of His Father, He would have been consumed. So the Mount of Transfiguration says the One who went to Gethsemane and to Calvary was absolutely in harmony with His Father. There was no sin in Him at all. He didn’t die because He was a sinner. He was perfect. But He was made to be sin. In fact, Ellen White says nobody could make Him to be sin. He made Himself to be sin. He took it on Himself. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke*, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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### **Further Study with Ellen White**

Christ came into the world to represent the Father to man; for Satan had presented Him before the world in a false light. Because God is a God of justice, of terrible majesty, who has power to destroy as well as to preserve man, Satan caused men to regard Him with fear, to look upon Him as a tyrant. Jesus had been with the Father from the everlasting ages, before the creation of man, and He came to reveal the Father, declaring, “God is love.” Jesus represented God as a kind Father, who careth for the subjects of His kingdom. He declared that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the notice of the Father, and that the children of men are of more value in His sight than many sparrows, that the very hairs of their head are all numbered. {LHU 36.2}

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. . . . Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. But not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it is revealed in Christ. {SD 21.4}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. . . . As Jesus was in human nature, so God means His followers to be. In His strength we are to live the life of purity and nobility which the Saviour lived. {SD 21.5}

To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind, which, next to Christ's, was first among the hosts of God. But He who would have the will of all His creatures free, left none unguarded to the bewildering sophistry by which rebellion would seek to justify itself. Before the great contest should open, all were to have a clear presentation of His will, whose wisdom and goodness were the spring of all their joy. {PP 36.1}

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng—"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love. {PP 36.2}

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. Since sin brought separation between man and his Maker, no man has seen God at any time, except as He is manifested through Christ. {MH 419.1}

"I and My Father are one," Christ declared. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." John 10:30; Matthew 11:27. {MH 419.2}

Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. Yet not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it was revealed in Christ. {MH 419.3}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {MH 419.4}

In contemplating the incarnation of Christ in humanity, we stand baffled before an unfathomable mystery, that the human mind cannot comprehend. The more we reflect upon it, the more amazing does it appear. How wide is the contrast between the divinity of Christ and the helpless infant in Bethlehem's manger! How can we span the distance between the mighty God and a helpless child? And yet the Creator of worlds, He in whom was the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was manifest in the helpless babe in the manger. Far higher than any of the angels, equal with the Father in dignity and glory, and yet wearing the garb of humanity! Divinity and humanity were mysteriously combined, and man and God became one. It is in this union that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in humanity, we look upon God, and see in Him the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person (ST July 30, 1896). {5BC 1130.5}

When Christ came into the world,—the Son of God and the Son of man,—He was not understood by the people of His time. Christ stooped to take upon Himself human nature, that He might reach the fallen race and lift them up. But the minds of men had become darkened by sin, their faculties were benumbed and their perceptions dulled, so that they could not discern His divine character beneath the garb of humanity. This lack of appreciation on their part was an obstacle to the work which He desired to accomplish for them; and in order to give force to His teaching he was often under the necessity of defining and defending His position. By referring to His mysterious and divine character, He sought to lead their minds into a train of thought which would be favorable to the transforming power of truth. Again, He used the things of nature with which they were familiar, to illustrate divine truth. The soil of the heart was thus prepared to receive the good seed. He made His hearers feel that His interests were identified with theirs, that His heart beat in sympathy with them in their joys and griefs. At the same time they saw in Him the manifestation of power and excellence far above that possessed by their most-honored rabbis. The teachings of Christ were marked with a simplicity, dignity, and power heretofore unknown to them, and their involuntary exclamation was: "Never man spake like this Man." {5T 746.3}