

125. Q. Where is this final and complete revelation recorded?
126. Q. In view of these facts what should we do?

Lesson Twelve

THE WORD WHO BECAME FLESH

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-18.

Scripture To Memorize: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:1, 2, 14).

TO INTRODUCE THIS LESSON, review the following truths which we have learned up to this point: 1. Our God is one God, a Spirit; that is, as the Absolute, He is pure Spirit; as such, His essential nature is personality. He is a personal God, and a living God. 2. He embraces within Himself, however, a threefold personality. 3. In the Old Testament Scriptures, this threefold personality is designated by the terms, God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God. 4. In the New Testament Scriptures, it is designated by the terms, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 5. This does not mean that there are three Gods, but one God rather, consisting of Three Persons. (As the essential nature of each of these Three Persons is personal; it follows that the essential nature of the Three together, or God in His entirety, is personal—a Spirit). 6. These three Persons are so described in scripture, that we are compelled to think of them as three distinct personalities, at least on occasions and in their numerous operations. 7. To these six truths we are now ready to add the seventh, viz., This triune personality of God is eternal; that is, it is inherent in the Deity and consequently has always been, as we are now prepared to show in this lesson.

127. Q. Who was born in Bethlehem of Judea?
- A. The Child who was named Jesus.

128. Q. Why was He named Jesus?

A. Because the name Jesus means "Savior;" and He came to be the world's Savior.

Matt. 1:21—"thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins."

129. Q. By whom was this name given to Him?

A. By God the Father, through the annunciating angel, Matt. 1:21.

130. Q. Did this One whom we know as Jesus exist as a person prior to His appearance as the Child of Bethlehem?

A. The Scriptures teach that He did.

(1) Jesus prayed to the Father in these words: "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). (2) On another occasion Jesus expressly declared: "Before Abraham was born, I am" (John 8:58); thus assuming for Himself the Name of the Deity, and in so doing asserting His own self-existence from eternity. (3) Paul says: "Christ Jesus who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man" (Phil. 2:7-11). That is, He did not consider His own equality with God a thing to be striven for, because it was His inherently, as He was deity by nature; and could therefore subordinate His deity and resume it again as he pleased. Cf. John 10:17, 18—"Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (4) In this connection, consider also those scriptures which expressly assert that He participated in the creation of the physical universe. See Heb. 1:2, 1 Cor. 8:6, Col. 1:16, 17, etc.

131. Q. What name is given to Him to describe the eternal relationship prevailing between the Father and Himself?

A. The name, Word of God.

(1) The relationship between God and the One whom

we know, in the flesh, as Jesus, must have been purely spiritual prior to His incarnation; hence it can be described only by a spiritual name. (2) Again, this relationship which existed between the Two from eternity was more intimate than is possible between human beings. (3) As this relationship was eternal, it is obvious that it could not have been designated by the term Son of God, because where there is father and son, the father must of necessity antedate the Son. But God and the Word have always been: they are coeternal. (4) The Holy Spirit selected the only term in our human vocabulary by which this eternal, spiritual relationship can be designated, viz., The Word of God. (5) There is no relationship more intimate than that existing between spirit and its own thought. Or, let us say, between your self and your own thought. No one but you can know your thoughts and ideas. 1 Cor. 2:11—"For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him?" This was the intimacy existing from eternity between God and the Word. (6) Again, the name Word of God describes a relationship that is eternal and purely spiritual. (7) The One whom we know as Jesus, was the Word of God in a two-fold sense: inwardly, in that He was from eternity "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18); and outwardly, in that He was the perfect expression, or revelation, of the wisdom, purity, power and holiness of the Deity.

132. Q. What does the Apostle John say about Him as the Word of God?

A. He says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

(1) Explanatory: the phrase "in the beginning" means literally before things began. (2) Before things began, the Word was, i. e., before the creation, the Word was. (3) The Word was with God, i. e., there were Two—God and the Word. When I am with you, there are two of us. (4) But, lest any one get the notion that the Word was less than, nor inferior to God, the Apostle adds: "and the Word was God." That is the Word as to nature was deity, as truly as God is deity.

133. Q. When did the Word of God become the Son of God?

A. When "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

134. Q. Through whose agency was this miracle wrought?

A. It was wrought through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:35—"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee," said the Angel to Mary.

135. Q. Through what human instrumentality was this miracle achieved?

A. Through the instrumentality of the Virgin Mary.

136. Q. What is this miracle called in the Scriptures?

A. His divine begetting.

Luke 1:35—"wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God."

137. Q. Why was He to be called the Son of God?

A. In consequence of His divine begetting.

138. Q. What does this name, Son of God, describe?

A. It is the name used to describe the relationship between God and the Word, then and after the Word became flesh.

In other words, it is the name used to designate the relationship which began at Bethlehem, through Mary. From that time on, it was no longer God and the Word, but the Father and the Son. This Divine Sonship was a matter of eternal decree. See Psa. 2:7.

139. Q. What is the name commonly given to this Mystery?

A. It is usually spoken of as The Incarnation.

140. Q. What does the Apostle Paul call this great Mystery?

A. He calls it "the mystery of godliness."

1 Tim. 3:16—"Without controversy great is the mystery

of godliness: he who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

141. Q. What does the term Incarnation signify?

A. It signifies that the Person who appeared at Bethlehem was the Divine-human Person; the Person who combined in Himself the two natures—the Divine and the human.

142. Q. What name is given Him to describe this Divine-human nature?

A. The name Immanuel.

Isa. 7:14—"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Matt. 1:23—"and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us."

143. Q. What, then, was Jesus?

A. He was Incarnate Deity.

144. Q. In what sense may we speak of Mary as the mother of Jesus?

A. In the sense that she, a pure virgin, was the passive instrumentality through whom God wrought this miracle of the Incarnation.

145. Q. Is there any Scripture ground for worshiping the Virgin?

A. None whatsoever.

Of course she should be respected and honored by all people, and especially by all Christians; but not worshiped. To worship the Virgin and to pray to the Virgin, are purely human inventions. After Acts 1:14, she is not even mentioned in the New Testament Scriptures. Jesus Himself said: "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:48-50).

146. Q. Did Jesus, then, have a human father?

A. No. God was His Father.

Jesus in all His teaching never once recognized any human being as His father, but without exception referred to God as His Father. Matt. 12:50—"my Father who is in heaven."

Joseph was merely His foster-father. His name appeared in the Hebrew records, of course, as the legal father of Jesus. Luke 3:23—"And Jesus himself, when he began to teach was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph," etc. Note the significance of the parenthesis: "as was supposed." Not however, in fact; because in fact He was the Son of God.

147. Q. In what special sense then was Jesus the Son of God?

A. In consequence of His Divine Begetting; hence He is repeatedly spoken of in the Scriptures as The Only Begotten Son of God.

Note the significance of the word only, in all cases where this term is used. John 1:14—"the only begotten from the Father." John 3:16—"For God so loved thee world that he gave his only begotten Son."

148. Q. What other reasons have we for believing that Jesus was the Only Begotten Son of God and Incarnate Deity?

A. Five reasons, especially: 1. He taught as God. 2. He lived as God. 3. He wrought as God. 4. He died as God. 5. He was raised up from the dead.

1. He taught as God. No one has ever been able to find a single flaw in His teaching. No one has ever been able to add a single moral or spiritual truth to the body of teaching which He left in the world. 2. He lived as God. He gave not only a perfect teaching but a perfect example as well. He was tempted in all points as we are, through His human nature of course, yet was without sin. No one has ever been able to point out a single defect in His character. He lived the Perfect Life. 3. He wrought as God. His miracles, as to kind, were of the widest variety. He had absolute power over nature. He had but to will or command, and thing willed was done. 4. He died as God. That is, He gave Himself in utter Supreme Sacrifice, not merely for His friends, but for His enemies as well. John 10:18. 5. He was raised up from the dead. By his conquest of death and the grave, He brought life and immortality to light. The final proof of His deity is His resurrection from the dead.

149. Q. In view of this array of evidence, what should we do?

A. We should believe and confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Matt. 16:16, Rom. 10:9, 10. This is the good confession which is to be made with the mouth, unto salvation: What excuse has any responsible person for not confessing Christ—now? Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2).

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON TWELVE

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144. Q. In what sense may we speak of Mary as the mother of Jesus?
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Lesson Thirteen

THE PRIORITY OF SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: John 6:52—65.

Scripture To Memorize: "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (John 6:63).

150. Q. What is our first objective in this series of lessons?
- A. It is to help our pupils to know God our Heavenly Father.
151. Q. What is our second objective in this series of thirteen lessons?
- A. It is to reemphasize the spiritual view of the universe and of life; and to implant in the minds of our pupils the right spiritual attitude towards life and its problems.
152. Q. What fundamental knowledge is necessary to the attainment of this right attitude towards life?
- A. The knowledge of the Priority of Spirit.

Heb. 9:14—"the eternal Spirit." Gen. 1:2—"the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." John 6:63—"It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing." Gal. 5:25—"If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk."