

A BIBLICAL EVALUATION OF *THE UB*
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PART VII: What Does *The UB* Say about the Divinity of Man?

“. . . in revelatory religion, men are taught that they are God’s sons—even fashioned in the finite image of divinity”
(92:5.1)

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”
(Romans 10:3)

Introduction

Instead of portraying man as a race of fallen sinners in need of redemption, *The UB* grants potential divinity to man in the form of a “Thought Adjuster,” a non-personal fragment of the Universal Father that invades and indwells the human mind just prior to a person’s sixth birthday (108:2.1). It is through this invasion that the seed of a person’s soul is sown, and by virtue of the individual’s moral development thereafter that a person’s soul develops. It is man’s ultimate purpose to strive for and attain perfection through this interaction with his inner divine self:

“. . . an actual fragment of the living God resides within the intellect of every normal-minded and morally conscious Urantia mortal. The indwelling Thought Adjusters are a part of the eternal Deity of the Paradise Father. Man does not have to go farther than his own inner experience of the soul’s contemplation of this spiritual-reality presence to find God and attempt communion with him.” (5:0.1)

“Moral evolution is not wholly dependent on revelation. High moral concepts can be derived from man’s own experience. Man can even evolve spiritual values and derive cosmic insight from his personal experiential living because a divine spirit indwells him.” (95:3.2)

“With man, the eventual fusion and resultant oneness with the indwelling Adjuster—the personality synthesis of man and the essence of God—constitute him, in potential, a living part of the Supreme and insure for such a onetime mortal being the eternal birthright of the endless pursuit of finality of universe service for and with the Supreme.” (101:6.6)

“The secret of survival is wrapped up in the supreme human desire to be Godlike and in the associated willingness to do and be any and all things which are essential to the final attainment of that overmastering desire.” (110:3.2)

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“When your earthly course in temporary form has been run, you are to awaken on the shores of a better world, and eventually you will be united with your faithful Adjuster in an eternal embrace. And this fusion constitutes the mystery of making God and man one, the mystery of finite creature evolution, but it is eternally true.” (112:7.2)

“With Adjuster fusion the Universal Father has completed his promise of the gift of himself to his material creatures; he has fulfilled the promise, and consummated the plan, of the eternal bestowal of divinity upon humanity.” (112:7.14)

“In the Supreme Being, Creator and creature are united in one Deity whose will is expressive of one divine personality.” (117:1.5)

Now, compare and contrast the above *UB* passages with their biblical counterparts below:

“ . . . your heart is lifted up, and you say, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods . . .,’ yet you are a man, and not a god, though you set your heart as the heart of a god” (Ezekiel 28:2)

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.” (Romans 10:3)

“Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; yes, let him recount to Me in order, from the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place.” (Isaiah 44:7; NASB)

“To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him?” (Isaiah 40:18)

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

“The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live.” (Ecclesiastes 9:3)

The Bible unequivocally states that all men are sinful, and that no man can be reconciled to God or satisfy his conscience except through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Romans 3:23 and 1John 1:8 are just two of the many verses in the Bible that tell us man is not basically good, but basically evil. *The UB* tries to blame this “bad” theology on the apostle Paul:

“Jesus did not share Paul’s pessimistic view of humankind. The Master looked upon men as the sons of God and foresaw a magnificent and eternal future for those who chose survival. He was not a moral skeptic; he viewed man positively, not negatively. He saw most men as weak rather than wicked, more distraught than depraved.” (196:2.9)

But Paul is not the only apostle about whom *The UB* should worry, for John’s Gospel portrays Jesus as one who is in complete agreement with Paul:

“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” (John 3:18-20)

Romans 3:10-18 also informs us that there is not so much as one person who is without sin and that humans, in their fallen state, cannot know what is in their own best interest apart from revelation. Jesus taught this by stating that fallen men and women will not choose truth on their own (John 6:44). But rather than neurotically repressing our guilt feelings, we know that in Jesus Christ we can have forgiveness of sin and peace with God through His plan for salvation.

Salvation in a New Light

As has been described earlier, the salvation offered by the *UB* authors is not equivocal with biblical salvation. To them, “salvation” (a.k.a. “survival;” see 188:4.7) comes when you realize that you already are a Son of God. By this, they mean that you yourself are, in essence, a god. One is merely a leap of faith away from attaining this form of “salvation.” There are plenty of passages to cite from *The UB* that allude to this intended meaning, should there be any doubt:

“This giving of himself to his creatures creates a boundless, almost inconceivable future possibility of progressive and successive existences for these *divinely endowed mortals*.” (3:4.4; emphasis added)

“Man could not dynamically *choose the divine life* if there were no self-life to forsake.” (3:5.13; emphasis added)

“Curiosity—the spirit of investigation, the urge of discovery, the drive of exploration—is a part of *the inborn and divine endowment* of evolutionary space creatures.” (14:5.11; emphasis added)

“It lifts man out of himself and beyond himself when he once fully realizes that there lives and strives within him something which is eternal and *divine*.” (103:5.9; emphasis added)

And finally, it was Jesus of Nebadon who, “by the valor of his personal religious faith and the heroism of his indwelling Adjuster, ascended from the lowly levels of humanity to become one with divinity, thus becoming the new and living way whereby all mortals may so ascend from humanity to divinity” (196:2.4). Coming to such a realization, of course, would certainly remove the nagging burden of guilt that one naturally feels for the transgressions one habitually engages in. The only problem is that this “epiphany” will inevitably leave one with a false sense of security regarding their position with God. Self-deification is a Satanic lie that has entangled many since the beginning of mankind’s existence. It is the promise offered by the serpent to Eve in the Garden of Eden: “For God knows that in the day you eat of [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). Yet the promise is as empty today as it was then. Fallen man did indeed become “like God,” but only in that he took upon himself to know good and evil, not that he acquired godhood (Genesis 3:22). (As we have already seen in previous discussions, this fatal encounter

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between Eve and Satan is grossly reinvented in *The UB*'s version of human history in such a way that the issue of man's fall into sin is completely done away with.)

In the Bible we find that only Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son, could make any atonement for our sins. We cannot be saved by anything else, whether by works *or* knowledge, except by His gift to us on the cross (Romans 3:21-24). Jesus is the only One through whom salvation can come (John 14:6), and this salvation does not include the deification of man. Salvation is described in the Bible as a change in one's attitude and allegiance (2Corinthians 5:16,17), not a sudden realization of one's divine nature. Righteousness is imputed upon us once we receive and believe Jesus' atoning sacrifice on our behalf. We *become* sons of God because we are adopted into God's family vicariously; we are not automatic heirs just because we recognize and claim our rightful position thereto. To do so would be the height of arrogance.

Sons of God?

How, then, are we meant to be "like God"? Being made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) indicates that man is to represent God and share His moral character, not that man can be metaphysically like God (Genesis 5:1; 1Corinthians 11:7; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10). Likewise, the goal of being like Christ is tenable only in the aspects of sharing His moral character (1John 3:2; Romans 8:29) and being raised with glorified, immortal bodies like His (Philippians 3:21; 1Corinthians 15:49). Becoming partakers of the divine nature refers again to moral nature ("having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"), not metaphysical nature (2Peter 1:4; cf. Hebrews 12:10).

Once we attain our salvation through faith in Jesus, we have the high privilege that God the Father dwells within regenerate believers (Romans 8:11; 1Corinthians 14:25; Ephesians 4:6). The Bible also tells us that Jesus indwells believers (Romans 8:10; 2Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 1:27; 1John 4:4) and the Holy Spirit indwells believers (John 14:17; Romans 8:9; 1Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). But this personal relationship with God is not automatically bestowed upon us at a young age, nor does it hold true for all people (Matthew 7:13-14; Romans 8:9; 1Corinthians 2:12; Ephesians 2:12; 2John 9, Revelation 3:20). Only through a personal commitment to repent and receive God's gift of salvation do we enter into this relationship with God (John 10:7,9; Ephesians 2:18; Revelation 3:20).

Be You Perfect?

Strewn throughout *The UB* is the mantra-like imperative that echoes a statement made by Jesus during His Sermon on the Mount: "**Therefore you shall be perfect just as your Father in heaven is perfect**" (Matthew 5:48). This statement comes at the end of a passage in which Jesus was admonishing His disciples to set a divine standard for themselves by loving one's enemies (Matthew 5:43-48). Jesus knew full well that this standard was unachievable, just as many of His statements made during the Sermon on the Mount were meant to point out man's shortcomings and their need for Him as their mediator. *The UB*, however, turns this statement around by adopting it as its core teaching of self-perfection, the edict to *become* perfect as we progress through the ascension path of cosmic glory. The droning of this mandate begins as early as the introductory paragraphs of Paper 1:

"God-knowing creatures have only one supreme ambition, just one consuming desire, and that is to *become*, as they are in their spheres, like him as he is in his Paradise perfection of personality

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and in his universal sphere of righteous supremacy. From the Universal Father who inhabits eternity there has gone forth the supreme mandate, ‘Be you perfect, even as I am perfect.’” (1:0.3; emphasis added)

The UB leaves no room for misinterpretation of its misapplied context of this passage, as the preface to Paper 1 continues:

“This magnificent and universal injunction to strive for the attainment of the perfection of divinity is the first duty, and should be the highest ambition, of all the struggling creature creation of the God of perfection. This possibility of the attainment of divine perfection is the final and certain destiny of all man’s eternal spiritual progress. . . . This is the true meaning of that divine command, ‘Be you perfect, even as I am perfect,’ which ever urges mortal man onward and beckons him inward in that long and fascinating struggle for the attainment of higher and higher levels of spiritual values and true universe meanings.” (1:0.4,6)

This “injunction” for self-perfection is repeated unsparingly throughout *The UB* (7:4.7; 26:4.5; 26:9.3; 26:11.4; 31:3.6; 37:5.3; 40:7.4; 56:0.1; 137:8.13; 140:5.15; 140:10.1; 142:7.13; 161:1.10; 181:2.25). *The UB*, not surprisingly, even attributes many of these repetitious utterances to Jesus, often rephrasing the message to emphasize man’s outright duty to strive for the attainment of *becoming* perfect:

“For has not the Father said of his children of the world, ‘It is my will that they should eventually be perfect, even as I am perfect.’” (137:8.13)

“And then Jesus went on to instruct his followers in the realization of the chief purpose of all human struggling—perfection—even divine attainment. Always he admonished them: ‘Be you perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.’” (140:5.15)

“The Son of Man is prepared to ascend to the right hand of the father, so that in me is the way now open still wider for all of you to see God and, ere you have finished the glorious progression, to *become* perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” (142:7.13; emphasis added)

“Be patient and of good courage since you have the eternal ages before you in which to continue your progressive attainment of the experience of *becoming* perfect, even as your Father in Paradise is perfect.” (181:2.25; emphasis added)

But Jesus of the Bible pronounced this edict as an attitude one should adopt toward one’s fellow man in the here and now, not as a self-willed incentive for attaining perfection in the hereafter. One could argue that there are several biblical verses, Old Testament and New alike, that appear to be alluding to “man’s perfection” (e.g., Genesis 17:1; Leviticus 19:2; Deuteronomy 18:13; Matthew 5:48; 2Corinthians 13:11; James 1:4). However, these verses all pertain not to our nature but to a call for idealistic behavior, such as walking blamelessly (Genesis 17:1) or exhibiting perfect love even to our enemies (Matthew 5:48). Only through acceptance of the blood of Christ as the atoning sacrifice that covers our unrighteousness are we *made* perfect in God’s eyes (Hebrews 12:22-24), not through anything we are capable of attaining through our own volition.