

## The Wonder of Jesus Lesson 1 2Q 2008

Who was Jesus?

What answers have you heard to this question?

Jesus was:

A prophet

A good man

These two answers are commonly put out by people on earth, why is this non-sense?

CS Lewis states (part of this quote is in Friday's lesson):

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic -- on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg -- or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. – *Mere Christianity*, pages 40-41.

Why can we really not conclude Jesus was a prophet or a “great moral teacher” only?

What about a created being an angel, a man, a created Son of God or offspring of God?

Why is this question so important? Does your understanding of the issues in the GC taint how one sees this question? Does it make a difference and if so how?

If Christ is a created being what do we learn about our Creator from the life of Christ? We learn He is willing to sacrifice His creatures to protect Himself, that He demands payment and appeasement, blood sacrifice.

If Christ were a created being we would learn something wonderful about Christ, but not so wonderful about God. But Jesus said, that He and the Father are one, that He spoke only what the Father gave Him to speak, Hebrews states He was the exact representation of the Father, Isaiah says the child that was born was “everlasting Father.”

Why is it so important that Jesus be fully God? What were the issues in the war? Attacks on God’s trustworthiness, but what wedge do you think Lucifer used to implicate God? Well before we answer this let’s step back and lay some groundwork, the groundwork of who Jesus was and is:

John 1:1-3,14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Isa 9:6 For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Col 1:15-17 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were

created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

John 14:9-11 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? <sup>10</sup> Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

John 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

Does the Bible teach Jesus is fully God? Yes, Jesus is fully divine, pre-existent, eternal, Creator - but what does the Bible teach us in regard to the form Jesus took in the universe prior to His incarnation here?

Exodus 3:1-6 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight-- why the bush does not burn up." When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I

am." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

Acts 7:30 "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord's voice: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.

Genesis 16:7–13 The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

"I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered.

Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." The angel added, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count."

The angel of the LORD also said to her:  
 "You are now with child  
 and you will have a son.  
 You shall name him Ishmael,  
 for the LORD has heard of your misery....

She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her:  
 "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me."

Who was the angel of the Lord? Was it God Himself?

Genesis 22: 16-18 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time <sup>16</sup> and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup> I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, <sup>18</sup> and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Jude 9

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. <sup>8</sup> But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. <sup>9</sup> The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

1Thes 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Revelation 1:17,18 "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

Who is the angel of the Lord? The Lord Himself!

What difference does it make to realize that Jesus, who is fully divine, fully God, manifested Himself in the form of an angel prior to coming as a human?

How did the war start in heaven? Over what issue? How did Lucifer create a pretext to allege God to be untrustworthy and arbitrary?

Do you think Lucifer alleged equality with the Father or claimed equality with the Son, the one who was manifesting Himself as an angel? And then alleged God the Father was unfair to show preference over Lucifer in taking Christ into counsels and not Lucifer? Are there other texts in the Bible that give us clues to this question?

ISA 14:12 How you have fallen from heaven,  
**O morning star**, son of the dawn!  
 You have been cast down to the earth,  
 you who once laid low the nations!

Who is this verse talking about?

Read 2 Peter 1:19

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the **morning star** rises in your hearts.

Who is this verse talking about? Do you notice the term morning star, from the Greek phosphorus, which means bright light, translated into Latin – Lucifer – the bright and morning star.

What does all of this mean? God is not a power monger, He is humble, gentle, gracious and stoops to meet His creation on their level. The Bible tells us God lives in unapproachable light 1Tim6:16, angels cannot fully enter into infinity. So God humbles Himself to meet them where they are, but also God elevates His creation and imbues them with the highest

exaltation and gifts possible to bring them to the highest pinnacles of attainment and development. Therefore Lucifer was created as the sum of perfection and Christ met Him on His level appearing as a covering Cherub.

One of the founders of our church saw it similarly:

Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. **And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.** {PP 35.2}

**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}

Does this give insight as to why Christ was the member of the Godhead through which all was created? Why Christ was the member the Godhead who came to redeem?

Why is it so important that Jesus be fully God? What were the issues in the war? Attacks on God's trustworthiness, but what wedge do you think Lucifer used to implicate God? How could this be cleared up by anyone other than God Himself?

Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavored to prove God's principles of action to be selfish, and he deals in the same way with all who serve God. To disprove Satan's claim is the work of Christ and of all who bear His name. Ed 154

It was to give in His own life an illustration of unselfishness that Jesus came in the form of humanity. Ed 154

## SABBATH

Read second paragraph: "It is what might be..."

Thoughts? Have you ever thought how hard it was for them to believe Jesus was the Messiah? How would you feel if someone who was born in Ooltewah or Summit and grew up with you went to the local school, you saw in church each week, worked with his dad as a local carpenter stood up one day at age 30 and said he was the messiah? Would it be hard to accept?

What would one need to accept such a claim? Evidence? What kind? Miracles only? Fulfillment of Scripture – what was it that convinced the disciples on the Road to Emmaus? The evidence of scripture. What convinced the other disciples? Christ's teaching, the evidence of His character!

## SUNDAY and MONDAY

Read Matthew 16:13,14

MT 16:13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

MT 16:14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Have you considered that some thought He was John the Baptist? What does this mean? The lesson suggests this might be due to the fact there was no mass media, no TV, radio, that people didn't travel much. And this probably did cause rumors to spread and misinformation to occur.

But, to me this demonstrates another factor –

Read Mark 11:27-33

MK 11:27 They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. <sup>28</sup> "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you authority to do this?"

MK 11:29 Jesus replied, "I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. <sup>30</sup> John's baptism--was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!"

MK 11:31 They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' <sup>32</sup> But if we say, 'From men' . . . ." (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.)

MK 11:33 So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."  
Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

What light does this passage shed on the issue? Who did John the Baptist say Jesus was? Did they know who John the Baptist said Jesus was? Then if they knew John the Baptist said Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, why would some people be saying Jesus was John the Baptist?

Misinformation, defamation, distortion, lying, misrepresentation, do you think that some were purposely circulating misinformation to confuse? Would Satan do such things?

What about Elijah or Jeremiah? These rumors could also have been misinformation, but Elijah is a little more interesting for a couple of reasons. First, Elijah never died but went to

heaven and a prophecy existed that Elijah would return before the Messiah to herald His arrival, which of course was fulfilled in John the Baptist. So the Elijah idea seems more likely to be one of mistaken identity, failing to comprehend all the evidence.

TUESDAY/ WEDNESDAY

Questions?

In Wednesday's lesson it asks:

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18, NIV). Why is the message of the Cross so important for us today, as well?

Why is the cross foolishness to those perishing? Is antibiotics foolishness to those with pneumonia? Then why is the cross foolishness to those perishing?

Why are they perishing?

2Thes 2:10 They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

They perish because they didn't love the truth, what truth? They don't accept the truth about their condition, they don't accept the truth about God, they don't accept the truth about sin, they don't accept the truth about God's plan to heal and restore.

So those who are perishing don't love truth thus they don't recognize a need so the cross becomes foolishness because of their ignorance. Like a witch doctor thinking antibiotics are foolishness because they have their chicken bones to cast.

## THURSDAY

Read first paragraph “Who Jesus was...” Thoughts?

If Jesus is not who we have believed Him to be – then what have we lost? If we have lived a life in which we love others more than ourselves, in which we are not afraid for the future, in which we have developed healthy mature character, in which we are loyal, faithful, kind, patient, gentle, true etc. are we worse off for it, have we lost something if Jesus isn't who He says He is? I am just pointing out, that the benefits of knowing Christ don't start in the hereafter, they start now!

What is the point of “we are dealing with the faith of untold numbers over the centuries”? Are there millions who have had faith in Buddha over the centuries etc.? Is faith not something to be proved?

## FRIDAY

Read questions 1, 2, 3 and discuss