

## WHO IS JESUS?

We have already shown that the clearest picture we have of God is Jesus who, in answer to the request, *"Lord show us the Father"*, answered, *"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father"* (Jn.14:8, 9) Later the Bible tells us:

"In the past God spoke to us through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being (nature or person)..." - Heb.1:1-3

If you want to know what God is like, search His Word but most of all look at Jesus, who is, *"the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being."*

Jesus once asked His disciples, *"Who do you say I am?"* Simon Peter answered, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

Jesus' reply to this is intriguing. He didn't say, "Good man! You have worked it out."

"Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.'" - Matt.14:15-17

The Bible makes it clear that, like Peter, we need God to show us who Jesus is. That is why prayer is so very important. If God is who Christians say He is, and if He has something to communicate to us, we need to put ourselves into a place where we can receive that knowledge. We do that by praying, reading the Bible, and thinking about what we find.

The Bible tells us that:

### **JESUS WAS:**

#### **Alive before creation:**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning...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" - John 1:1, 2, 14

John 1:1 literally means, "When the beginning began Jesus was already there," He is an eternal being and had an existence before coming to earth. Verse 3 also tells us that through Him all things came into being, and life was in Him. This cannot speak of an inanimate object but must speak of the person of Christ who existed before everything else.

Philippians 2:6-7 goes on to show that just as Jesus actually existed as man, He had already existed as God.

Finally we can also mention John 8:58, which succinctly says that "before Abraham Was. I AM." Jesus was in existence before Abraham and therefore clearly had a life before He came to earth.

## **Always Christ:**

The angel's declared that Jesus Was Christ right from birth:

"For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" - Luke 2:11

## **The Creator of the Universe:**

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him [Jesus] 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" - Col.1:16

## ***Jesus is not a created being:***

Often the word firstborn is taken to mean 'first to be created'. Let's look for example at Colossians 1:15 above:

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."

The word translated 'firstborn' is the Greek word *prototokos* and means the first-begotten. It can never mean the first one to be born. Its meaning is 'priority to' or 'pre-eminence over'; therefore Jesus is the pre-eminent one over all creation and not a created being Himself.

Most translators use the English word 'firstborn' as it best describes the Greek. We need to discover what the Greek word actually means and how it was used at the time the New Testament was written. The word is also used in Colossians 1:18.

"He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead..."

Does it mean that Jesus was the first one to be born from the dead? That could not be true because in the New Testament there were at least three others before Jesus, including Lazarus, apart from those mentioned in the Old Testament. Is the Scripture wrong? It must be if Jesus is called the first one to be born from the dead. There is no confusion however when we take the true meaning of the Greek word as position, place or ranking.

This is clearly seen in the Old Testament where on at least two occasions the first to be born lost the position of 'firstborn' to the second to be born. 'Firstborn' has always, in the Hebrew tradition, had to do with place and pre-eminence. The end of the above verse makes this abundantly clear:

"... so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything."

Greek scholar W. E. Vine, in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, points out that in Exodus 4:22 it was impossible for the whole of Israel to be the firstborn. It must be referring to their position and place before the Lord. Again in Deuteronomy 21:16-17 a second born son can become the firstborn by giving him the pre-eminence! We could also refer to Jeremiah 31:9 'Ephraim is my firstborn'. God

has told a lie, because Ephraim was not the first to be born! The explanation is found in Genesis 48 where Israel blessed Ephraim and gave him the pre-eminence although he was not first to be born.

### **Conceived supernaturally:**

"This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit" - Matt 1:18

### **Both Human and Divine:**

#### Humanity

The humanity of Jesus is shown by the fact that He grew as a human did; He had feelings such as hunger and thirst, as a human would; He also suffered and died in the way that a human would.

He acknowledged the term Son of Man and He was tempted as a man although He never sinned.

However there are also many Scriptures that show that He was not *only* man.

#### Deity

In John 5:16 we find Jesus being persecuted for healing on the Sabbath. His response to this begins: "My Father..." From this the Jews understood that Jesus was claiming to be **equal with God**.

John 20:24-30 records the second time that Jesus appeared to the disciples, after His resurrection, but the first time that Thomas sees Him. Thomas' response was to acknowledge Jesus as, "*My Lord and my God.*" The Greek here is emphatic; Thomas' words are *ho theos*, the God – not just 'a god.' If this were not so Jesus would have had to rebuke Thomas, but in verse 29 He commends all those who will believe the same as Thomas believed. In the midst of those who were to go out to teach the early church, Jesus accepts the **acclamation that He is God**. What did the apostles believe? They believed that Jesus was God. What must we believe from this incident? Clearly that Jesus knowingly and readily accepted the acclamation of being God.

In Revelation 5:13-14 we have an insight into Jesus' heavenly ministry. Who is receiving this honour, glory and worship? It is the One on the throne (The Father) and the Lamb (Jesus). Are we not to do what heaven is doing?

Every creature gives this glory to Jesus, who therefore **cannot be a created being**. If Jesus is less than God, if He is really a created being, even a created heavenly being, the Bible would show that there was idol worship in heaven – creature worshipping creature. No angels, except fallen ones, no other heavenly creatures ever receive worship; only God receives worship in His heavenly kingdom. **Jesus therefore must be God**.

## **Two natures united**

This leads to the mystery of the union of these two natures in one life. As we read the story of Jesus we do not see two separate entities that can be clearly distinguished. We cannot say, here He is God and there He is man. The two are inseparable and bound together as the God-man. He owned both the title Son of God and Son of Man. His dual nature is no better illustrated than in Paul's letter to the Philippians:

"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness" Philip.2:6,7

## **Sinless:**

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin" - Heb 4:15

## **JESUS IS:**

### **The revelation of God:**

We have already seen that the Bible says of Jesus:

"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being..." - Heb 1:3

And Jesus said of Himself:

"Jesus answered...Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" - John 14:9

To look at Jesus is to look at God.

### **The Son of God:**

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus...who, as to his human nature was a descendent of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God" - Rom.1:4

### **Jesus IS God:**

The Bible tells us that Jesus "was God":

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" - John 1:1

The Bible tells us that Jesus accepted worship as God:

"Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!' Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'" - John 20:28, 29

The Bible also tells us that God commands angels to worship Jesus as God:

*“And again, when God brought His firstborn into the world, He says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship Him.’ In speaking of the angels He says, ‘He makes His angels winds His servants flames of fire.’ But about the Son He says, ‘Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the sceptre of your kingdom...’” - Heb 1:6, 8*

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