

Basics of the Christian Faith
Lesson 3
Jesus Christ

Who is Jesus? From a natural standpoint there is little question whether a man named Jesus Christ lived and died in Palestine about two thousand years ago. A Roman historian named Tacitus, in writing about the atrocities Nero perpetrated on Christians, mentions the fact that Christ was put to death under the emperor Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate. The most critical, nonreligious skeptic, when presented with the historical record, would probably even concede that point.

Jesus is God

There are no explicit “I am God” statements. But, there are plenty of clues to who Jesus is.

Divine Prerogatives

Forgive Sin – Mark 2.5; the reaction – verse 7.

Judge of the World – Matt. 25.31-46.

The “I AM” – Ex. 3.14-15; John 8.58

Fullness of God – Col. 1.15-20; 2.9

Kurios – Rom. 10.13 [Joel 2.31-32]; 1 Peter 3.15 [Is. 8.13];

Implications

1. We can have real knowledge of God (John 14.9).
2. Redemption is available to us – this was not a finite human who died, He, the Life, the 3. Giver and Sustainer of life, who did not have to die, died.
4. God and Man have been reunited. God crossed the chasm created by sin.
5. Worship of Christ is appropriate.

Jesus is Man

He was born

He grew physically – Luke 2.52

He hungered – Matt. 4.2

He thirst – John 19.28

He got tired – John 4.6

He got angry – Mark 3.5

He became moved and troubled – John 11.33

He died – Mark 16.7

Implications

1. The atoning death of Jesus can truly avail for us. He was not some outsider, he was one of us. Just like the OT priest, he offered a sacrifice on behalf of his people.
2. Jesus can truly sympathize with us (Heb. 4.15).
3. Jesus manifests the true nature of humanity. Jesus not only told us what perfect humanity is, he exhibited it.
4. Jesus can be our example. The biblical standards for human behavior, which seem so hard to attain, are seen in him to be within human possibility. There must, of course, be full reliance on God. The fact that Jesus found it necessary to pray and depend upon the Father is indication that we must be similarly reliant upon him.
5. Humanity is good. Jesus was one.
6. God is not totally transcendent. He is not so far removed from the human race.

What Did He Do?

He was our ransom – he did not specify to whom the ransom was to be paid or from whose control the enslaved were to be freed, Jesus indicated that his giving of his life was to be the means by which many would be freed from bondage (Matt. 20.28; Mark 10.45). The word ransom (*lutron*) is used in the OT with the thought of deliverance from some sort of bondage in exchange for the payment of compensation or the offering of a substitute.

He was our substitute – John 15.13.

He was our sacrifice – John 17.19; the concept (*hagiozo*) is a term common in sacrificial contexts. The language is appropriate to the preparation of a priest and the preparation of a sacrifice. John 1.29.

Jesus came for the purpose of giving his life as a ransom, a means of liberating those people who were enslaved to sin. He offered himself as a substitute for them. Paradoxically, his death gives life; we obtain it by taking him into ourselves. His death was a sacrifice typified by the OT sacrificial system.

Jesus was our reconciler – 2 Cor. 5.19; Rom. 5.8.

He condemned sin – Rom. 8.3

What Is He Doing?

Intercession – Rom. 8.34; Heb. 7.25

The function of the high priest was to plead our cause. Christ can do this more effectively than Aaron or any of his descendants. This intercessory ministry shows his present activity for his people and is a direct continuation of his earthly ministry.

He reigns – 1 Cor. 15.25

Discussion

Do you know what it means to accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? It means that we believe that what the Bible says about him is true. We accept the fact that he died to reconcile us to God. We promise to live our lives according to the commands in the Bible. It also means that we have received the Holy Spirit, which is God's presence in our lives. This presence enables us to live a life that is pleasing to God.

Have you accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior? If you have not, what is keeping you from making this decision?

If you have accepted Christ as Lord and Savior, does your lifestyle portray that decision? Is it making a difference in your life?

Has anything you've learned in this study helped you relate to Jesus in a different way?