

"Jesus the Son"

Spiritually and morally, Jesus was the most outstanding man who ever lived. Was He just a man? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're going to explore the deity of Jesus. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. And I'm thankful for the Scriptures, because they tell me what I need to know about the Lord Jesus Christ; they teach the undeniable truth. It's a great blessing and privilege to know Him and to serve Him. The Scriptures open the door for us to have a close relationship with the One who created us, saves us, and loves us. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

What shall we do with Jesus Christ? How do we understand Him? Some say He was a perfect man and nothing more; some say He was a great moral teacher; and others question whether he really lived or was an invention. The Scriptures, however, present a different picture of Jesus. They describe Him as divine and allow Him to be called Lord and God. They reveal His place in creation, in the sustaining of life, and in our salvation. They present Him as the only head of the church, the only authority over all flesh, and as our Judge on the last day.

In all history, Jesus stands out as the champion of love, of truth, of hope, of peace, and of righteousness. Utterly selfless, Jesus gave Himself completely to bless all people. Utterly sinless, He practiced what He preached, He gave hope to the oppressed, and He forgave the guilty. His constant message to weak and sinful people was to repent and turn to God. He comforted the grieving, raised the dead, healed the sick, delivered the demon-possessed, and fed the hungry. He told people what they needed to know to have eternal life. No human could perform miracles or live without sin as Jesus did. Jesus wasn't merely human, as some think. He was divine!

Now if you want to study more, we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free online at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Colossians 1:15 to 20, and we'll consider Jesus the Son.

Our reading today comes from Colossians chapter 1, verses 15 to 20. "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven." That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Father we're so grateful that You sent Jesus Your Son into this world. And Father we pray that we may give Him our love and our devotion, knowing that He is the ruler of all things, and should have first place. It's in His name Father that we pray, Amen!

Was Jesus more than a man? Some say He was a great moral teacher and some a prophet like Moses or Elijah, but to us He is the Son of God. Calling Jesus the Son of God means that you recognize Him as Himself divine. Many passages of Scripture clearly describe Jesus as deity or divine. The

opening of the gospel according to John says in verses 1 to 4, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. And all things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men." In this passage, the Word was God and yet was with God in the beginning. Everything that exists came into being through Him; you see, He created it. He gave us life.

The gospel according to John is also clear that Jesus has always existed. In John 8 and verse 58 you remember the Lord Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." Now Abraham lived nearly two thousand years before Jesus was born, but Jesus said that He existed long before Abraham. The Lord Jesus Himself prayed to the Father in John 17 verses 4 and 5, he said "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." Though Jesus didn't have a fleshly existence until two thousand years ago, He has existed forever.

John chapter 1 and verse 14 says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten (or the only unique) from the Father, full of grace and truth." You know it's always been God's plan that Jesus would come into the world. 1 Peter 1 and verse 20 says, that "He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you."

The prophet Isaiah spoke of the birth of Jesus and told us much about Him in Isaiah 9 verses 6 to 7, he said "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, And on the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness, From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this." Jesus was indeed a descendant of David, since both Mary and her husband Joseph were descendants of David. He established His kingdom, the church; and it exists to this day. Jesus is indeed our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace.

You remember that an angel of the Lord told Joseph in Matthew 1 verses 21 to 23, that "She (that is Mary) will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Then he says now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." Jesus is indeed God with us, God manifested in the flesh so that He could save His people from their sins. When we look at Jesus, we understand God much better. John 1 verse 18 says, that "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." Now Jesus reveals God to us.

The Lord Jesus explained Himself in John 14 verses 6 to 7. When He said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; and no one comes to the Father but through Me. (And then He said) If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." You see, we know what God is, and what He is like because Jesus came to earth to reveal Him to us. The writer to the Hebrews said in Hebrews 1 and verse 3 that Jesus is "the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power." Jesus reveals God's undeniable power, God's great wisdom, God's steadfast love, and God's utter holiness. We can see the character of God in His Son, in the life of Jesus Christ.

If we wish to come to the Father, we must recognize Jesus our Lord is the only way. Acts 4 and verse 12 says, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." You can't find God the Father any other way today than through a knowledge and relationship with Jesus Christ His Son. The Lord Jesus in prayer said in John 17 and verse 3, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." Knowing the Father and the Son brings eternal life and forgiveness; and you can't get these things any other way than through Jesus. Salvation is in no one else.

John also reveals to us an amazing story of a doubter who had to be convinced of Jesus. You remember that when Jesus first appeared after His resurrection to His disciples in the upper room "on the evening of that day, the first day of the week (when He was resurrected)," you'll remember that the apostle Thomas at first wasn't present. Well when Thomas heard Jesus had arisen, he said, well "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark that's in His side, I will never believe."

Well, John 20 verses 26 to 28 says, "After eight days (that is the next first day of the week) His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.' Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'"

Thomas' confession of Jesus as Lord and God is bold and clear. The word "Lord" is a reference to Deity and has its roots back in Exodus 3:14 when God told Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." Well from this phrase comes that Hebrew word "Yahweh," the name of God, which is translated in the Greek Old Testament with the word "kurios." Now this is the very word that Thomas used when he said to Jesus, "My Lord ("kurios") and my God!" To say Jesus is Lord is to recognize that He is divine. When Peter concluded His inspired sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2 and verse 36, he declared, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified." My friends, Jesus indeed is Lord.

Well John is not the only witness to the deity of Jesus. Paul also helps us understand how He was in the form of God but fashioned as a man. Philippians 2 verses 5 to 8 says, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient even to the point of death, even death on a cross." When Jesus came to this earth He emptied Himself and took the form of a bondservant. He humbled Himself and obeyed the Father to the point of death on a cross.

The apostle Paul by inspiration said of Jesus in Colossians 1 verses 15 to 18, that "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He's the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything." When the Scripture says Jesus is the "firstborn of all creation," that scripture isn't saying that Jesus was created but that Jesus has authority over all creation, that's the meaning of the term. Indeed, Jesus said in Matthew 28 and verse 18, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." As firstborn Jesus has all authority over us,

you and me, today! Paul also said that Jesus is our God and Savior. He said in Titus 2 and verse 13, "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."

But for any study of Jesus to be complete, we must examine His heart and recognize His love. As the Son of God, Jesus healed the sick, touched the leper, reached out to sinners, offered His forgiveness to the prodigal, and He showed patience to Peter when he denied Him three times. Jesus wept with Mary and Martha at the death of Lazarus and wept over spiritually fallen Jerusalem. Jesus taught us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. He fought the temptations of the devil and taught us to watch and pray that we might not enter into temptation. Jesus fought the legalism of the Pharisees and the greed and robbery of the money-changers in the temple. Jesus prayed for the Father's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. He never gave in to His own will at Gethsemane. He blessed the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, the meek, the one who mourned, the peacemaker, the one who hungered for righteousness, and the one who was persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Because He was divine, He knew the hearts of all people. John 2 and verse 25 says, "He didn't need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man." He knew all the good, all the bad, all the fears, all the pride, all the hurts, and all the desires. He knew when people cared about God and when they didn't. He gave the worried reason to trust, He gave the downtrodden hope, gave the sinner forgiveness, gave the doubter faith, gave those who were despised love, and gave those who were proud a dose of humility. Jesus gave us what we needed and He gave it to us when we most needed it. Because He had divine wisdom, He knew what to say, when to say it, and how to say it. He spoke simply but profoundly, directly but lovingly, and truthfully but kindly.

We see His heart most clearly at Gethsemane and on the cross. Jesus didn't revile those who reviled Him and didn't threaten those who caused Him to suffer. Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those who crucified Him, because they didn't know what they were doing. Jesus never called for the twelve legions of angels to deliver Him from the cross, but He remained there in agony until He died.

Why did He suffer? He suffered it all because He loved us more than He loved life. He suffered because that was the will of His Father in heaven. He suffered because He knew that His death would bring forgiveness and would open the door for a lost world to see His love and repent. He suffered because He wanted fellowship with you and me in this life and in the life to come. Jesus wasn't merely a man; He was the Son of God! And because He is, you must decide what you will do with Jesus. My friend, what will you do with Him? Let's pray together. Father, we are so grateful that You have sent Your Son Jesus into this world and that He loved us so deeply. Father help us to love Him even as He loved us. And to be obedient just as he was obedient. And Father, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

In Matthew 27 verses 22 to 25, Pontius Pilate asked the crowds after the trial of Jesus, "what shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?" They all said, "Crucify Him!" And he said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they kept shouting all the more, saying, "Crucify Him!" Well Pilate washed his hands in front of the people saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves." Pilate then had Jesus scourged and released Him to be crucified. The crowds demanded His blood and Pilate simply washed his hands of Jesus. What are you doing with Jesus? Are you washing your hands of Him? Are you rejecting Him?

Many wouldn't call for Jesus to die on a cross, the way that the people did in those days; what they do today is simply ignore Him. Others wish that He'd quietly disappear, because they don't want to hear His teaching on morals or on truth. They'd rather continue living in sin than follow Christ, but

think with me! When you ignore Christ, you're ignoring your only hope for forgiveness and eternal life. When you reject Christ, you're refusing His love and His sacrifice for you on the cross . You're saying His agony and His cruel death don't matter. That He died for no reason at all, and His love isn't important. My friend, won't you love Him and recognize His love for you?

To demonstrate your love, place your faith in Jesus Christ, repent and give up your sins, confess Him as the Son of God and your Lord, and be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Now this baptism is in water and it's for the forgiveness of your sins. Acts 22 verse 16 says, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." When you're baptized, the Lord will add you to His church, you'll be born again and free from sin, and God will call you His child. O friend obey the Lord today! And don't delay!

We hope that today's study about Jesus has stirred you to follow Him and to put Him first in your life. We're now publishing a booklet entitled One God, Three Persons, and we'd love to send you one free when they're ready in November. Well if you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, then mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or you can send e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons at our website: www.searchtv.org. We also offer Bible Correspondence courses. But if you write or contact us, don't worry, we won't hassle you for money or put you on a list.

Well we encourage you to get involved with a church of Christ. Now, there's one nearby, go there and visit with them. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So that we ask that you keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about the program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.