

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS? - 9/13/2020

INTRODUCTION — WHO WAS — and IS — JESUS OF NAZARETH??? SOME SAY HE WAS A CYNIC PHILOSOPHER, SIMILAR TO SOCRATES in GREECE. SOME SAY HE WAS A PROPHET OF DOOM, WARNING OF THE COMING END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT. SOME SAY HE WAS A WISE SAGE, WHO OFFERED PRACTICAL WAYS TO LIVE LIFE and GET ALONG WITH OTHERS. FOR MOST OF THESE NEWER WAYS TO INTERPRET JESUS, THE LAST THING THEY WILL SAY IS THAT HE WAS the SON of GOD, WHO TAUGHT US HOW to LIVE ACCORDING to GOD’S PLAN for US, and DIED ON THE CROSS for OUR SINS. THESE VIEWS HAVE BEEN POPULAR in many PULPITS and THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES in EUROPE and NORTH AMERICA in the last 100 years. IT IS A VIEW NOT SHARED BY ALL CHURCHES, and I DOUBT it is a view shared by VERY MANY PEOPLE HERE TODAY.

BUT, FOR THE LAST 100 YEARS, A QUESTION HAS BEEN GROWING ACROSS the NORTHERN HEMISPHERE: “WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?” THE ANSWER to that question tells us ABOUT WHAT WE TRULY BELIEVE, and WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO US— and what SHOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT.

I. DIFFERENT VIEWS of JESUS:

A. OUTLAW— “that he roamed across the land, with a band of unschooled ruffians, and a few old fishermen. No one knew just where he came from, or exactly what he’d done, but it must have been something BAD— that kept him on the run....”

B. POET, or TEACHER— that he had a POWERFUL EFFECT on people by the STORIES he told, and the TURN OF PHRASE he would make. IT WASN’T ALWAYS EASY TO UNDERSTAND HIM, but THOUSANDS of people would come to hear him, “AND PEOPLE SAT FOR HOURS JUST TO LISTEN TO THIS MAN....” SOME SAY HE WAS A:

C. SORCERER, or MAGICIAN— that he just “USED SLEIGHT OF HAND” w/ the simple people of PALESTINE— “HEALING PEOPLE, PERFORMING MIRACLES” — “he did tricks with WINE and BREAD; he talked of being ‘BORN AGAIN,’ and raised PEOPLE FROM THE DEAD.” OTHERS SAY:

D. POLITICIAN, or REVOLUTIONARY— that he CALLED THE PEOPLE of ISRAEL TO THROW OFF THEIR ROMAN OPPRESSORS, and to SET UP A NEW KINGDOM in ISRAEL, with HIM AS THEIR KING!!!

E....AND SOME SAY HE WASN’T REALLY A HUMAN BEING AT ALL— HE WAS A KIND of “SUPER-HUMAN” CREATURE, or a GOD-LIKE CREATURE, who only APPEARED to look like a HUMAN BEING. ( Docetism )

F. WHAT IS THE ANSWER?? ACCORDING to the BIBLE: ALL THOSE “ATTEMPTS” TO TELL US WHO— JESUS CHRIST REALLY WAS— ARE LIES! That is what JOHN says here in I JOHN 2:22— “Who is the LIAR but the one who DENIES that JESUS IS THE CHRIST??”

G. WHY????! There are a VARIETY OF REASONS WHY, but basically— THEY HAVE a MIS-PLACED DESIRE in DEFINING JESUS CHRIST to be THIS TYPE of SAVIOR or THAT TYPE of POLITICIAN or whatever. AND THEY DENY

or CONFUSE the TRUTH ABOUT WHO JESUS REALLY WAS— & IS!! MANY want to Re-interpret JESUS in MODERN TERMS, rather than UNDERSTANDING Him in HIS TIME, FROM HIS OWN WORDS. DOESN'T IT MAKE SENSE TO LISTEN TO WHAT A PERSON HAS TO SAY

ABOUT THEMSELVES??? DOESN'T IT MAKE SENSE TO LISTEN TO WHAT THE EYE—  
WITNESSES TELL US ABOUT A PERSON?????

THEN LISTEN TO WHAT JESUS HIMSELF, and the BIBLE— the HISTORICAL RECORD of  
EYE—WITNESSES of JESUS' LIFE— HAVE TO SAY:

## II. WHAT DOES the BIBLE TELL US ABOUT— JESUS CHRIST?!

A. That JESUS CHRIST is the SON of GOD — GOD IN THE FLESH!

1. John 1:14— “The WORD became FLESH, and dwelt among us, and we BEHELD his glory, GLORY AS OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN from the FATHER, FULL OF GRACE and TRUTH.” (NASB)

2. John 1:18— “No one has seen GOD at any time; the only begotten SON, who is in the BOSOM of the FATHER, has EXPLAINED HIM to us.”

3. JESUS HIMSELF SAID: “HE WHO HAS SEEN ME HAS SEEN the FATHER (GOD in HEAVEN).” (John 14:9b)

B. HE is ALSO: the SON of MAN— A HUMAN BEING, WHO IDENTIFIES with EVERY HUMAN BEING, who is here TO BE JUST LIKE EVERY ONE OF US, and not to . . . . .

1. “LORD IT OVER” ANY OF US. IN MARK 10:45, Jesus said: “For even the SON of MAN did not come to BE SERVED, but TO SERVE....”

2. HE CAME: TO BE A SERVANT !!

C. That verse ends: “...AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM FOR MANY.” FOR JESUS CHRIST ALSO CAME TO DIE FOR OUR SINS.

1. JOHN TELLS US in I JOHN 2:2— “[CHRIST] IS the ATONING SACRIFICE FOR OUR SINS . . . .”

2. THE BIBLE ALSO SAYS: “GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, in that WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.” (Romans 5:8)

D. HAVING RISEN FROM THE DEAD, he is OUR ADVOCATE in Heaven with the FATHER. I JOHN 2:1—

“IF ANYONE SINS, WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH the FATHER, JESUS CHRIST the RIGHTEOUS ONE.” What does all this MATTER?????????

## III. WHO DENIES — JESUS CHRIST?????

A. I JOHN was written as warning about EARLY GNOSTICISM.

1. GNOSTICISM was a “SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY” developed by Greek people, starting in the NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD, that taught that AVERAGE PEOPLE WERE IGNORANT and WOULD NEVER UNDERSTAND TRUE SPIRITUALITY, but CERTAIN BLESSED PEOPLE MIGHT RECEIVE A “HOLY ZAP” FROM GOD so that they could REALLY KNOW and UNDERSTAND GOD and SPIRITUAL THINGS. (In Greek, the word KNOW= GNOSIS; hence, “GNOSTICS,” or “KNOW-IT-ALLS”!!!)

2. The GNOSTICS believed that CHRIST WAS GOD (in a way), BUT THAT THIS PHYSICAL WORLD IS TOO EVIL and RIDDEN BY SIN TO BE REDEEMED— and GOD IS TOO HOLY TO

EVER TOUCH THIS UGLY, GROSS, SINFUL WORLD— so CHRIST COULDN'T HAVE COME PHYSICALLY TO THIS WORLD— he only “APPEARED” TO BE. AND IF YOU WANTED TO BE REALLY SPIRITUAL, GOD MIGHT GIVE YOU THIS “HOLY ZAP OF KNOWLEDGE” and YOU WOULD SEE THIS, TOO!!!

3. JOHN IS SAYING HERE THAT the ESSENCE of the ANTI-CHRIST of the BOOK of the REVELATION IS: DENIAL of JESUS CHRIST!! THE ANCIENT GNOSTICS WERE NOTHING MORE THAN LITTLE ANTI-CHRISTS— AGAIN— What does all this MATTER?????????????

B. IT MATTERS BECAUSE: THERE are MANY MODERN GNOSTICISMS— TODAY!!

1. MORMONS— They teach that “WE CAN ALL BECOME LIKE JESUS, and BECOME GODS OURSELVES!!” THEY BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE CAN achieve “godhood” through good works, and that GOD gave Joseph Smith a “NEW REVELATION” or “NEW SCRIPTURE” in 1823 (The BOOK of MORMON), and that POLYGAMY WAS NEEDED, so that “SPIRIT CHILDREN” in HEAVEN can be born onto the earth.

2. JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES— Have a simple doctrine of GOD, DENYING the TRINITY of GOD’S PERSON, and TEACH THAT JESUS WAS CREATED by GOD— in HEAVEN, JESUS was the ANGEL MICHAEL, but on Earth he was just a man. They have a VERY COMPLICATED DOCTRINE of the END OF TIME, and have set 3 or 4 DATES for Christ’s return, WHICH HAVE ALL PASSED.

3. “JESUS ONLY” — THIS SMALL GROUP teaches that THERE IS NO “FATHER in HEAVEN” and no “HOLY SPIRIT” — ONLY JESUS.

4. MODERN PHILOSOPHY— teaches that “JESUS WAS ONLY A MAN, A GOOD, GODLY MAN, but ONLY A HUMAN BEING— NONE of THIS ‘SON of GOD’ STUFF. HE DIDN’T ‘DIE FOR OUR SINS’ — HE WAS FALSELY ACCUSED of TREASON AGAINST the GOVERNMENT, AND WAS KILLED FOR IT. BUT— HE TAUGHT US GOOD MORALITY and ETHICS, HOW to LOVE EACH OTHER and TREAT OTHERS, and HE SHOULD BE FOLLOWED IN THAT WAY.”

WHY??! “MODERN PEOPLE DON’T BELIEVE in MIRACLES, in ‘INCARNATION’ or ‘RESURRECTION!’ BUT JESUS WAS A GOOD, GODLY MAN!”

WHY SHOULD WE LOOK AT THIS????

C. IT IS MOST IMPORTANT— WHAT YOU THINK OF JESUS CHRIST—

1.... WILL DETERMINE HOW YOU LIVE. IF— JESUS IS the SON of GOD, and YOUR SAVIOR-----  
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THEN ASK YOURSELF:

— Is the FELLOWSHIP of CHRIST in CHURCH REALLY IMPORTANT??

— Is the WORSHIP of GOD and JESUS CHRIST A PRIORITY FOR YOU??

— Is SERVICE TO JESUS EACH DAY— FOLLOWING HIM & OBEYING HIM— THE HIGHEST PRIORITY FOR YOU???

2. WHAT YOU THINK of JESUS CHRIST WILL DETERMINE WHAT YOU DO ABOUT EVANGELISM. — ASK YOURSELF:

-- Is JESUS CHRIST the only hope for SALVATION for a lost and HOPELESS WORLD????

— Is JESUS CHRIST the only hope for SALVATION for your FRIENDS, RELATIVES, ASSOCIATES and NEIGHBORS????

THEN: WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?? WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO LET YOUR FRIENDS, RELATIVES, ASSOCIATES and NEIGHBORS KNOW THE ONLY ONE IN WHOM THEY CAN HAVE EVERLASTING HOPE????

D.T. NILES, a Methodist Bishop in INDIA, once defined EVANGELISM as: “ONE BEGGAR SHOWING ANOTHER BEGGAR WHERE TO FIND BREAD!”

3. WHAT YOU THINK OF JESUS CHRIST and WHAT HE CAN DO FOR OTHERS WILL SHAPE HOW YOU SPEND YOUR LIFE.

IS JESUS CHRIST THE CENTER OF YOUR LIFE?????

YOU SEE— if ANYTHING ELSE is what you make YOUR MAJOR DECISIONS in life for— then THAT is your “CENTER OF LIFE” — and it is in DANGER of becoming your god.

CONCLUSION— DAVID JANSSEN of Lexington, Kentucky.

— In Jan. 1990— met him at Asbury Theological Seminary. Was going through a divorce. Confused; torn up...

— Wasn't sure about what he believed about Jesus . . . .

— Corresponded for TWO YEARS: counseled him about Christ & our need . . . .

— On FRIDAY, JAN. 29, 1993— I stopped at LEXINGTON COMPUTERS as I left town from a week of studies--- and DAVID JANSSEN was a computer salesman there!!! HE HAD ACCEPTED CHRIST as his SAVIOR a year before, and gotten involved in a UNITED METHODIST CHURCH.... GOD HAD GIVEN HIM— a CHANGED LIFE through JESUS CHRIST!!!