

# WHO IS JESUS?

## *Who is Jesus? What did he say about himself?*

Courtesy of JD Hatfield

Luke tells us in chapter 4 that he stood in the synagogue and read the book of the prophet Isaiah. He found the place and deliberately read to these people the words, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19). He stopped in the middle of a sentence, closed the book and sat down. Then he said to everyone there, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing;" that is, "It's me."

Take those marks of the Messiah and lay them beside the seven signs that John chooses from the ministry of our Lord and you will see that he selects those particular ones because they are the signs that prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.

John 6:35 - And Jesus said unto them, **I am the bread of life**: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Jesus gave us a physical example with the miracle of feeding the five thousand. (6:1-14) This miracle appears in all four of the Gospels. What is the meaning of these signs? Well, you cannot read the story of the feeding of the five thousand without seeing that it is a marvelous demonstration of the desire of the Lord to meet the deepest need of the human heart, the hunger of man of God. He uses the symbol of bread. He himself had said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4) Taking the bread, he broke it, and with it fed the five thousand, symbolizing how fully he can meet the need of human life.

John 10:11 - **I am the good shepherd**: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Another sign Jesus gave was the healing of the nobleman's son. (4:46-54) The central figure in that story is not the son, who lies sick at the door of death, but the nobleman, who comes to the Lord with a heart crushed with grief. In the agony of his heart he cries out to Christ and says, "Will you come down and heal my son?" The Lord not only heals the son at a distance, with a word, but he heals the broken heart of a father. As he said: he was anointed to heal the brokenhearted.

John 11:25 - Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life**: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

The miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44), symbolized the delivering of those who all their lives had been held captive under the bondage of Satan through fear of death (Hebrews 2:15). 1 Corinthians 6:14 (NLT) - *And God will raise our bodies from the dead by his marvelous power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead.*

John 8:12 - Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world**: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Another miracle is the healing of the blind man. (9:1-12) This hardly needs comment. Our Lord said he came "to give recovery of sight to the blind." He chose a man who was blind from birth, just as man is spiritually blind from birth, and he healed him.

John 10:9 - **I am the door**: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

The third sign in the gospel of John is the healing of the impotent man who lay at the pool of Bethesda. (5:1-9) Remember, that man had lain there for thirty-eight years. He had been a captive of this paralyzing disease, so that he was unable to get into the pool. He had been brought to that pool, hoping to be healed, hoping to be set free and our Lord singled him out of the great crowd of impotent folk and healed him, saying to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk." Here he was demonstrating his ability to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

John 15:5 - **I am the vine**, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

The first miracle of our Lord is the changing of water into wine. (2:1-11) That miracle was a parable. Our Lord was performing a symbolic act at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. He took that which belonged to the realm of inanimate being, water, and changed it into a living substance, wine. He took that which belonged to the realm of death and changed it into that which is forever an expression of joy and life. By this he is declaring in symbol what he came to do: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. He did not come to declare the day of vengeance; he stopped before that passage in Isaiah. But he came to declare the day of grace, when God's purpose would be to take man in his brokenness, his emptiness and his lifelessness, and give to him life---to proclaim the acceptable year (time) of the Lord.

John 14:6 - Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life**: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Jesus proved he was the way no matter what the circumstance when he walked on water. Sending his disciples out into the storm, he came walking across the waves to them in the midst of the tempest. The waves are high, and the ship is about to be overwhelmed, and their hearts are anguished with fear. He quiets them and says, "It is I; do not be afraid." (6:20) In the miracle of the walking on water, there is a symbolic representation of our Lord's ability to satisfy the need of human hearts and deliver them from their greatest enemy, fear. This is good news, is it not? This is one of the signs of the Messiah: he came to proclaim good news to the poor. Can you think of any greater news to tell anyone than that there is a way in which he can find all the clamant cry of his soul satisfied and all the fear of his life removed? Matthew 14:33

John 8:58 - Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, **I am**.

John goes deeper than just proving Jesus was the Messiah. He says that he is not only the Christ, but he is the Son of God. When you see him in his delivering power, you are indeed seeing the promised Deliverer, the Messiah. John says that is not the greatest secret about him. When you see that he is the one able to do all these mighty things, meeting the deepest need of men's lives, look further and you will see there is glory yet.

You discover that when you stand in the presence of his humanity, see his lovely eyes, feel the beating of his human heart, sense the compassion of his life poured out in service. you are also standing in the presence of God, you are seeing what God is like. "This One is the Son of God."

He declares that for us in the opening chapter of his Gospel: "No one has ever seen God;" that is a statement of fact. Man hungers after God, and he is always searching for God. But John goes on, "...the only Son," the only God, who is in the bosom of the Father, made him known." (1:18) Literally, he has exegeted God. He has unfolded what God is like.

Then in his Gospel, John picks up seven great words of our Lord that prove that statement. He bases it all on the great name of God which was revealed to Moses at the burning bush. When Moses saw the bush burning and turned aside to learn its secret, God spoke to him from the bush and said, "I am who I am." (Exodus 3:14) That is God's nature. That is, "I am exactly what I am. I am nothing more. I am nothing less. I am the eternal I am." Seven times in his Gospel John picks this word up and uses it about our Lord. In fact, seven times these words came from our Lord's own lips. These constitute the proof that he is Deity.

Does that amaze you? Have you thought that it was his miracles that proved he was God? No, no. They proved he was the Messiah, the Promised One. It is his words that prove he is God. Listen to them: "I am the bread of life." (6:35) That is, I am the sustainer of life, the One who satisfies life. "I am the light of the world" (8:12), the illuminator of life. "I am one [to borrow a phrase from Paul] in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," the explainer of things, the one who casts light upon all mysteries and enigmas and solves them.

"I am the door" (10:7), Jesus said; that is, the opportunity into life, the open way. Whenever you are confronted with a sense of lack, some hungering after something more, these are the words you need to hear. "I am the good shepherd" (10:11); that is, the guide of life, the only one properly equipped to take an individual and safely steer him through all the problems and chasms that yawn on every side, to lead him safely through life. ("The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.")

Then, "I am the resurrection and the life." (11:25) That is, the power of life. Do you realize that resurrection power is the only kind that works when nothing else will? It works in the midst of death. Resurrection power is the only kind that needs no outside props. no process of learning. It does not need anything to initiate it, shore it up or bolster it in any way. When nothing else can be done, then it comes in and begins to act. "I am the resurrection and the life," Jesus says.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life." (14:6) That is, I am ultimate reality. I am the real substance behind all things. "I am the vine...apart from me, you can do nothing. "(15:5). I am the producer of fruitfulness, the source of fellowship and of identity and communion.

Thus our Lord takes the great, revealing name of God and, linking it with these simple symbols, enables us to understand God. "The Word," John says, "became flesh and dwelt among us." He pitched his tent among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of God become man. That is the tremendous theme of this book. There is not a greater theme in all the universe than the fact that when we stand in the presence of the humanity of Jesus we suddenly discover that, for the first time, we also stand in the presence of God. This is what God is like. This one who heals, loves, serves, waits, blesses, dies and rises again---this is God. That is what John reveals.

The one word that he leaves with us, then, is that believing that he is the Messiah and that he is God, we may have life in his name. He is the key to life. Who does not want to live? Isn't that what we all want, young and old alike? What we are really seeking is the key to life. We want to be fulfilled. We want to see fulfilled all the possibilities and potential of our being which we sense lie deep inside. We want those deep yearnings satisfied. We want to be able to express ourselves. We want to be what we were designed and intended to be.

Then listen! John says, "These [things] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."

This brings us inevitably to two things: first, to worship. How can you stand in the presence of this divine mystery and not feel your heart drawn out in worship of this one? As we often sing,

Can it be that I should gain an interest in my Saviour's blood? Died he for me, who caused his pain? For me, who him to death pursued? Amazing love, how can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me? That is worship.

Isaiah, who saw the Lord lifted up and the temple filled with the smoke of his glory, bowed down and cried out, "Woe is me! For I am...a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." (Is. 6:5) Then an angel flew down from the altar, took a coal, and put it upon his lips, cleansing him.

That brought him to the next thing, to which we, too, must come, if we see what John is after here: not only worship, but service. "Love, so amazing, so divine," says Isaac Watts, "demands"--- what?---"my soul, my life, my all." How can we worship, unless as we hear the words of the Lord Jesus, "As my Father has sent me, even so, send I you," we say with Isaiah, "Lord, here am I, send me." (Is. 6:8) What could be greater than to stand in union with this life, around whom the whole universe gathers, the image of the invisible God?