

Who Was Jesus (part 2)

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[0 : 00] Well, we began a Bible study course for exploring Christianity. And just a few comments before we take up with that today.

I realized last week, I was somewhat suspicious of it, but I fully realized it last week, that though I want this course to be six sessions in length, there is no way that we were going to be able to do that with just 40 minutes or so here in our Sunday school class.

Especially if we're going to give time for discussion, which I would hope in a Bible study format of an exploratory type, there would be plenty of discussion. It would probably take more like an hour to an hour and 15 minutes to make our way through each of these evening sessions that would be planned for six total sessions.

So it's still six sessions, but it's going to take us a little longer than that. I'm not sure if it will be twice as long or what. But we're still on that first lesson this morning.

So I do want to include more discussion questions, and we'll keep tweaking as we go. And as I do work along, please give me your feedback and suggestions on how we could improve the course.

[1 : 20] I'm hoping that when we're done, we'll have something that is useful to you. And I also want you to feel free in this class to ask a question, either a question that you have yourself or that you think a person might have who has very little knowledge of the Bible, who would be coming to such an exploratory Bible study.

So you can ask this morning, if it's your question or it's something you think would be a burning question in someone's mind. Ask then as if you were inquisitive Irene or agnostic Agnes or just curious George.

If you become dominating Dominique, I'll put you in your place and we'll go on. But I'll do it gently. And we want to stay to the course. Our aim is to not get too far afield in terms of the time that we have.

So your questions. I might be calling timeouts in the middle of these sessions if I think, you know, there's something we ought to discuss as those who would be thinking of sharing this with others. We may call a timeout. If you have a question about how you would be leading, feel free to call a timeout in that sense and we'll seek to answer it.

[2 : 39] If it's something bigger, I hope after our study is done, the six sessions are complete, we'll have some time to discuss. Now how can this be implemented and taught in a real setting of one-on-one, you leading someone else or a small group such as that?

Well, let me briefly review what we saw last week and then we'll resume our study as if we're all in the same evening. We saw Luke's aim is to carefully investigate the account of eyewitnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's wanting to write his own account, his own orderly account of what happened with Jesus.

And he's doing it, as we saw, so that Theophilus might know the certainty of these things. So Luke, the historian, he wants to cut through anything but the facts.

He's investigating all the accounts to get to the facts. And remember, the eyewitnesses were still alive when Luke was writing just some 20 to 30 years after Jesus' resurrection.

[3 : 50] And so upon reading the first nine chapters is what the assignment has been to this point. It very soon becomes clear that the main person, the main theme of this book is Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

And it underscores an important lesson about Christianity itself. And that is just that Christianity is not about rules and rituals, but it's about a person. There are rules and rituals, but the person of Jesus Christ is front and center.

And the rules and rituals will mean nothing if you don't know the person and who he is and why he's come. So that's the main point of Christianity. And so Luke's intent on telling us who is Jesus and why has he come, what did he do, and then what is our response to be in light of who he is and what he's done.

In fact, Christianity could be defined and stated as just our response, the fitting response to who Jesus is and what he's done. So right off the bat, Luke tells us of the utter uniqueness of Jesus. He's both God and man. He's a descendant of David as to his humanity, and yet he is a son of the Most High God. And he records this information from the events surrounding Jesus' conception and birth at the beginning of his gospel.

[5 : 20] And then again at his baptism, Luke records that as Jesus was coming up out of the water, a voice from heaven spoke and said, You are my son. With you, I am well pleased.

Now, who uses this kind of language? Who calls people my son? What kind of people? Fathers. Mothers.

Parents. Parents. So right away again, Luke is just reinforcing what he told us at the conception and birth of Jesus, that he is a son of the Most High God. Now, 30 years later at his baptism, a voice from heaven speaks, You are my son.

Who is this? Well, this would be the heavenly father then. And we see again just vindicating the claim that Luke is making, that Jesus is none other than the eternal son of God.

Well, we saw that the name for our Savior, the personal name of our Savior is Jesus. Does anyone remember the title that was given to him more than any other title?

[6 : 25] He has many titles. But what was the one title above all others? Christ. And anybody remember what Christ means? The anointed one.

That's right. And who was anointed back in the Old Testament, the part one of our Bibles, back in Israel's history? Who was anointed?

Especially the kings. It was true of the other offices of prophet and priest, and Jesus fulfills all of them. But especially it was the king who was even referred to as God's anointed one.

And so the prophets told of a day when one special anointed king would come. And then 2,000 years ago from today, on the night that Jesus of Nazareth was born of the Virgin in Bethlehem, the angel pronounced that today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you.

He is Christ the Lord. So this long prophesied king is now here. He is God's anointed who brings God's kingdom and rule to earth.

[7 : 43] So this title tells us loads about who Jesus of Nazareth is. Well, Luke's after the truth, isn't he? And so in his gospel, he then goes on to lay out the evidence for these claims.

Evidence that Jesus is the Christ, this king who exercises the very authority of God. He speaks and acts for God. And so in the first place, under chapter 4, verses 16 to 22, how was Jesus' authority exercised?

Anyone? He speaks for God. So the very words of Jesus came with authority. Now, the anointed king was anointed with oil and that represented the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, when he was baptized, was anointed with the Holy Spirit himself. And so when he spoke, his words came as if the Spirit was sitting upon them.

They came with weight and power. And men said, what is this authority with which he speaks? So it was the authority of God. They were amazed at his authority as he spoke.

[8 : 54] So what Jesus says, God says, is what we see in this anointed king. And then in chapter 4, verses 38 to 40, we saw Jesus define authority in what way?

Healing diseases. Healing diseases. And one of the marks of Jesus' healings was that they were immediate.

He healed everyone who came to be healed. And it was most often in public, a very public thing, an undeniable miracle.

And with many eyewitnesses to check out. And Dr. Luke was interested to know that these were true healings. And he verifies them. We didn't look at a passage last week that I'd just like to refer to.

I don't believe we have time to read it. But it's chapter 7. I think it's on your list there. Chapter 7, verses 1 to 10. You remember the situation of a centurion's servant who was healed.

[10 : 02] And Jesus just was at a distance, wasn't he, from the centurion's house. And you remember the centurion says, just speak the word.

I don't deserve to have you come home with me and come to my house. Just speak the word and my servant will be healed. Because I, too, as a centurion, am a man under authority. I understand the authority structure in the military. I have those over me. And here I am. They have authority over me. And I have authority over a hundred men. And I say to this one, go. And he goes. And that one, come. And he comes. And I know that all you have to do is say, go. And the disease will go. And health will come to my servant. So just speak the word. And my servant will be healed. And it's one of the few times in the Bible that we read about Jesus being amazed. And he was amazed at his faith. Because here's a Gentile. [11:01] And he shows more faith than the Jews were showing in him as their Christ. Because this man understands how the universe works.

It works just like the chain of command in the military. And he understands that Jesus is at the top of that chain of command. And he has authority to just speak. And disease will obey just like one of his hundred soldiers obey him. Again, we're seeing the divine authority of Jesus Christ to just speak. And have diseases go. And to have health come. Well, we also saw by way of review in chapter 4 and verses 33 to 36. Jesus' divine authority over what? Pardon? Demons. All right? Those supernatural spirit beings. They too obey his word. He casts them out of people with just a word. And they obey. They're gone. What do we find about the testimony of these demons? [12:09] They know who Jesus is. So people living down here on this realm and in this plane don't know who Jesus is. And that's why Luke's writing this.

To teach us. But people who live in the higher realm, the spiritual realm, the angels, I should say the angelic beings, they know who he is. You are the son of God. One time they even said, you are the Christ. We know all about the promise of this coming anointed king. And that's you. And we know it. And often Jesus tells them to shut up and be quiet. Because it wasn't his time to have that announcement so clearly made yet. It would lead to his murder. And he still has ministry to do before he lays down his life on the cross. But they knew. So we see from that, again, just a vindication. Another evidence of the fact of Jesus' claim to have authority over all things. [13:08] To speak and act for God. Even the demons know it. And he casts them out with the word. And then, lastly, by way of review, in chapter 5, we saw his divine authority over what?

All nature. He speaks to the fish, to the wind, the waves. He walks on water. He turns water into wine. He multiplies bread. All creation responds to his will. He has authority over it. Now, that's where we left off last week. Any questions to that point, Mark? I think a question that might be asked is, before the Spirit ascended on Jesus at his baptism, was that necessary for him to have this authority? Or did he always have the Spirit in him even before his baptism? What was the reason the Spirit had to come upon him? Well, I believe, Mark, that what we have here is we need to remember that Jesus is unique.

He has a divine nature. And obviously, as a divine nature, he is as much God as the Holy Spirit is God, as the Father is God. He has all authority and power as God as to his divine nature. [14:23] But as to his human nature, he was here to demonstrate the perfect human life. And for that, his humanity needed to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit so that he can help us and show us, here's how the true man should live.

Here's how a true human being should live. And we can't draw, as it were, upon some divinity within us, our own divinity. If that's all Jesus did while he was on the earth, was drawing from his own Godhead, we might say, well, that's good for Jesus, but that doesn't help me because I'm not God. But he was also living as a man, as to his human nature, in dependence upon his Father and upon the Holy Spirit, who empowered him for a perfect life and ministry here on the earth, so that we, who have been saved and coming along behind after him, cannot say, well, I'm just a man. I need help. You have the same Holy Spirit to draw upon as the humanity of Jesus drew upon. And so I think that helps. Kind of parallels our conversion then? When we receive the Spirit. When we receive the Spirit, then that's similar to the Spirit coming upon the human Jesus. I think that's a fair enough parallel, yeah.

[15 : 45] Yes, Roger. Isn't that exactly what Christ meant when he said to John the Baptist, in order to fulfill all righteousness, I must do these things as a man.

Yeah. And yes, he had so many things to do in a short three-year period, and he would have gotten a mistake. Hmm. Yes, I think that's at least moving in the direction for an answer for that.

Well, we're on the next point then. Thank you. I called on Jim last week to read this just as his tablet was dying. I don't think he had his glasses.

And he had every reason to be excused, but he plugged along, dear faithful Jim. So you got it all today, Jim? Your glasses and your tablet?

Absolutely. I have someone. All right. You know, the Lord has given you a helper. My wife. Yes, he has. So we're going to ask Becky, would you read for us that passage?

[16 : 45] We're in Luke 5 and verses 17 to 26. This is where we're picking up our study on who Jesus is, the fifth evidence with regard to his claim to be the Christ who acts and speaks for God.

Chapter 5, verses 17 to 26, please, Becky. Okay, that's fine. Now it happened on a certain day as he was teaching that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by who had come out of their town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem.

And the power of the Lord was presented to heal them. Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before him.

And when they could not find how they might bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed, threw the timing into the midst of the Lord Jesus.

When he saw their faith, he said to him, Man, your sins are forgiven you. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this who speaks blasphemies?

[18 : 00] Who can forgive sins but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered and said to them, Why are you reasoning in your hearts?

Which is easier to say, Your sins are forgiven you? Or to say, Rise up and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, He said to the man who was paralyzed, I say to you, Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.

Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been laying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things today.

Like what strange things? Well, like the ceiling being broken through and lowering a man down to Jesus? Yeah, that was strange. That didn't happen every day. Like a lame man being spoken to and rising up?

Yes, that's another one of the evidences for Jesus' authority over diseases. We see that here. But what's the added element that amazed them? His authority to what?

[19 : 18] To forgive sins. And that's the point being made in this passage, I think the main point. And so we've got to ask the question, What is sin? What is your understanding of that three-letter word?

What is sin? Anyone? Pardon? To break what law? The speed limit or the laws of your job?

At your job? The law of God. So God has laws, and when we break His laws, it's called sin. More on that in future lessons. But so who is sin against?

God. You may sin against your wife, your husband, your neighbor, but when you sin against people, you're always sinning against God, aren't you?

Because it's His law not to treat your neighbor, wife, husband in that way. So we need to know that as we come to this passage. What sin is, it's breaking God's law, and so it's always against God.

[20 : 24] So that's what sin is. So if I stole your wallet and then I met a guy on the street who said, John, I forgive you for stealing his wallet, that might bring me some joy, but why would that not be something that you would be happy to hear?

It wasn't His wallet. And what does that infer? So I didn't sin against Him, I sinned against you, therefore what?

Pardon? So you're the only one that can forgive. The offended party is the only one that can forgive me for stealing the wallet. So here's Jesus saying to the paralyzed man, your sins are forgiven.

But if sin is a wrong against God, who does Jesus think He is to forgive sins? And that's precisely what the religious leaders were thinking in their hearts.

And Jesus, being God, also knows what they're thinking and addresses that. They said in their hearts, they were thinking, who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy?

[21 : 38] He's claiming to do things that only God can do. Who can forgive sins but God only? Now of course they were right, weren't they? Forgiveness is something that only God can do because all sin is against Him.

But they were also wrong, weren't they? And how so? What were they wrong about? Who Jesus is. The question that Luke is answering in his gospel. Who is Jesus of Nazareth? Who did they think He was? Son of Joseph?

Perhaps a crazy man. Yeah, they called Him a madman? A prophet? A teacher? A good teacher? A leader? A rabbi? All these questions.

But they missed the fact that He was God. So they were right that only God can forgive sins. They were wrong in that they failed to realize that Jesus is God with divine authority to speak and act for God to forgive sins.

[22 : 49] Now anybody can make a claim. I could stand here this morning and say your sins are forgiven. So anybody can make that claim, right? I mean, how do you prove it? Forgiveness is something that happens in heaven in the law books of God that He blots out that record.

There's my sin and it's put on the record books in the courtroom of God. John Henion, there's my sins. Well, you can tell me, well, John, your sins are forgiven, but how can we know that for sure? That's unseen by us. That's something only known in the heart of God. So how can we know? How does Jesus prove His claim to be authorized to forgive sin?

By healing. By healing. Now, we're going to ask the question, what's the connection between healing and forgiving sin?

Why does healing, this man, prove that he has authority to forgive sin? So that God can give up. Okay.

[23 : 55] Remember the question I left you with last week? It was one of Jesus' questions. Nobody asks questions like Jesus did. You keep bumping into them. It's the same Jesus that's asking Job questions.

But he's asking them, well, which is easier? To forgive sins or to say to this paralytic, stand up and walk? Now, you've had a week to think about it. What do you think?

Which is easier? Both are impossible to mere men, right? You can't speak and have a paralyzed man rise. You can't forgive sins because it's not against you.

So these are both possible. Now, Jesus has just claimed to have the authority to forgive sins. That's impossible for a man to do. How can we know that he really possesses that authority if he then says to the paralytic, rise, take up your mat and go home?

And he does it. So these two fall together, don't they? They go together. As goes the one, it proves the other. If Jesus does what only God can do in healing him, he must be God who can forgive him.

[25 : 07] So the visible healing proves the invisible forgiveness of sins. That which man could not see that Jesus was making a claim to. And again, it was immediate.

It was public with many eyewitnesses that were packing the house inside and out. They saw this man brought on the mat, lowered down through the ceiling. If it was just a show, they wouldn't have gone to those ends, would they?

Just to put on a parade here if he really wasn't paralyzed. No, he was paralyzed. There were men there who knew him for, were his friends and they all testified this really happened.

So, can you see why this Jesus is not someone to be ignored then? Forgiveness is something we all need because we've all sinned.

We've all broken God's laws. So, we all have this need for forgiveness. And the good news that Luke is announcing is that there is forgiveness to be had from God and that Jesus Christ, his son, has the divine authority to hand it out on earth.

[26 : 17] He is here as the Christ with authority to forgive sins. any questions on his authority to forgive sins? We've got a couple others to cover here but I want to give you the opportunity.

Yes, Carol? Yes, Agnes. Have at it. So, if I have a disease and God does not heal my disease, does that mean he didn't forgive my sins?

Hmm. That's a good one. John talks about that in his gospel because the disciples asked that very thing. And I'll give you that reference afterwards and you can read it, all right?

Maybe I would spend more time if we had the time but I'm wanting to finish. I would hate to think that one lesson is going to take three weeks but it's an excellent question. You can see why Agnes would maybe be thinking that.

And, again, isn't it something how the Bible answers really important questions? And I'll give you that passage afterwards. No, it doesn't mean that at all. Let me go on.

[27 : 27] The sixth evidence of God's authority being upon Jesus, that he has a divine authority, is in chapter 7, verses 11 through 17.

And, Dave Richards, would you please read that for us? Chapter 7, 11 through 17. Soon afterwards, soon afterwards, he went to a town called Nain and his disciples and a great crowd went with him.

As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother. And she was a widow and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, Do not weep. Then he came up and touched the bier and the bier stood still.

And he said, Young man, I say to you, arise. And the dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him to his mother.

[28 : 41] Fear seized them all and they glorified God saying, A great prophet has arisen among us and God has visited his people.

And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country. So here's a widow. She has an only son and he's dead.

And Jesus raises him back to life not by giving CPR to him, not by shocking his heart, but simply by what?

Speaking. And isn't that the theme that Luke is showing us? That Jesus' authority, divine authority is seen in his ability to speak and have things happen.

And so he speaks as one who he speaks to the dead man, doesn't he? As if he's expecting him, the dead man, to hear his voice.

[29 : 43] As if he had authority over death. Young man, I say to you, get up. And isn't it interesting that Dr. Luke says the dead man. Doesn't say the young man.

No, he was dead, dead. He'd been dead for some time. They'd already met in the home. They were coming out for the burial. And Jesus spoke and the dead man sat up and began to talk and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

What authority is this? That even the dead hear his voice and obey. There were other examples in chapter 8, verses 49 and following.

There was a man named Jairus who had a daughter, 12-year-old daughter who died. And Jesus said to her, my child, get up. And we're told that her spirit returned.

Death is the departure of the spirit from the body. We're spirit, body, creatures. And when that spirit departs, we're dead. It had departed and Jesus spoke and the spirit returned.

[30 : 48] And he gave her back to her mother. father. Now, Jesus' divine authority then over death. Why is this something of great interest to us?

Here we are studying around the table this something that happened 2,000 years ago in a little town of Nain. Why is this important for us?

We're all going to die. Here we are. Six of us here tonight. How many of us? How many out of six are going to die?

Six out of six. Well, then that means that six out of six of us ought to be interested if there's one who has authority over death. I ought to be interested to find out more about him.

And could he possibly have authority over my death? Well, Jesus is claiming that, isn't he? And then he's demonstrating it. He's acting as if he has authority and then it's shown to be true.

[31 : 50] Now, when we come to the end of Luke, we're going to see that Jesus himself dies. And then he will show his power in the most ultimate way by rising from the dead himself.

And that was his greatest sign of authority as God. Well, we need to hurry to the last proof. In chapter 5, verses 27 to 32, Sam Hawes, would you read that for us?

Sam, not Hawes, he's not here today, so we'll ask our brother Sam to, Sam from England, what's your last name? Heart, yeah, the guy with a heart.

527 to 32. Yes, . . .

. . . Okay, here we find Jesus' divine authority being that He has authority to command people to follow Him, to follow Him, to become His disciples.

[33 : 27] And here we find Jesus calling upon Levi to follow Him as His leader in life, to believe what Jesus says, to do what Jesus says, as if He has the authority over other people, that they

should be following Him, what He says and what He says to do.

That's an authority, and Christianity is just about responding appropriately to who Jesus is. And that proper response is to follow Him.

And we'll see more of that in the future lessons. He has authority to lead us in the right way, the very best way, the way we're meant to live. And to not follow Him is not something to be regretted, or I should say to follow Him, to take, to come behind the Lord Jesus and to follow His teachings and do what He says is not something to be regretted but celebrated.

What was the first thing Levi did when he followed Jesus? Celebration! As if this is not something to be regretted. This is good news.

It's a wonderful thing to be a follower of Jesus. And I'd like you all to come over to my house and meet Him for yourself. We see that being a follower of Jesus is the best thing that could happen in life, to have Him to lead us through this life.

[34 : 55] Well, we're going to see that that call to follow Him wasn't just for Levi and people of his time, but it's for us as well. That's another lesson down the road. But here then is the evidence that Luke is putting forth things that he has searched out from eyewitnesses that he said, you can know for certain that this happened.

Proofs that Jesus is God's anointed King with the very authority and power of God to reign. Now, before we conclude tonight, the issue turns personal.

I need one more of you to read from chapter 9 and verses 18 through 22. 18 to 22.

Donnie, do you have that there? Once when Jesus was trained in a private and His disciples were with them, He asked them, Who do the crowd say I am?

They replied, Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life. But what about you?

[36 : 05] He asked, Who do you say I am? Peter Andrew, God's Messiah. Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. And He said, The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law.

And He must be killed and on the third day He should be raised to life. All right. Thank you. Many today think that Jesus was a great man, a good teacher, said a lot of good things.

There were many ideas circulating about who Jesus was in His own day. And here are some of them. But then Jesus turned it to His disciples and said, But what about you?

Who do you say that I am? Now that is the burning question so far in the Gospel of Luke. Who is Jesus? And Luke's not happy just to leave that out there.

Well, this is who He is. But He's wanting to ask you. And this question you see is coming from the Christ to you. Who do you say that He is?

[37 : 12] How does Peter answer on this occasion? He is the Christ. God's Messiah. The Old Testament word for anointed one.

He is this promised King with divine authority. That's who He is. This is His true identity. We were told that back in chapter 2 by the angel.

He is born. He's Christ the Lord. Now we see that Peter realizes it and confesses it along with the disciples. So Luke is wanting us to personally answer this question.

Who do you think? Who is Jesus to you? Maybe up to this point He's just been a strange figure in history that you've heard about. You really wondered, was He really a historical figure?

And so this is why I'm so excited to see you at our study. Because you can read the original accounts of people who saw Him and heard Him and learn for yourself who He is.

[38 : 13] And Luke's account is set before us with this very purpose. So as you leave tonight, give some thought to who Jesus is. Who is He? Is He just a good man?

Was He just a good teacher? And now He's no more. Or was He truly God's anointed? God's anointed King with authority and power of God.

If so, that should make a difference in how we respond to Him. Now, as we close, there's a book called Mere Christianity written by a British writer and professor named C.S. Lewis.

And he puts this question of Jesus to us. Who do you say that I am? Who is Jesus? And this is what he said. And I want you to tell me what you think of what he said.

He says, I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Jesus. That I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher.

[39 : 17] But I don't accept His claim to be God. Well, that is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher, would he?

He would either be a lunatic on the level with a man who says he's a poached egg, or else he would be the devil of hell, just lying through his teeth.

You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God, or else a madman, or something worse.

You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon, or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher.

Do you sense his logic? Does it make sense to you, Agnes? Okay? It's a good thing, and we could discuss this if we had time.

[40 : 28] You see, the option isn't open, and that's what he says at the end. He has not left that open to us, that option. He did not intend to.

So we're being pushed by the evidence. We can't just claim what so many people claim, he was a good man, a prophet. No, the evidence won't let us claim that. He was anything but a good man if he wasn't who he claimed to be.

So, let the evidence bring you to the truth of who Jesus is. There's cookies and punch, and we can sit around and talk about C.S. Lewis until you all want to go home and get to work tomorrow.

Well, we're dismissed. Yes, Yes,