

Jesus Christ

In a human body we know Him as Jesus Christ yet the Bible tells us that He existed before the world was created and it was through Him, by Him and for Him that the world was created. In the spiritual realm, where He existed before He came to live on earth in human form, He was a spirit. He was the Word and He was one with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

Paul in his letter to the Colossians speaks of Jesus in the following way.

Colossians 1vs13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

John opens his gospel by telling us of the Word who was made flesh (Jesus) and who lived amongst people. He existed at the beginning of time with God and all things were made through Him. In accordance with what had been prophesied hundreds of years before, the one through whom the world was made came into the physical world as a helpless baby, born of a virgin mother, conceived by the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament the prophet Isaiah foretold of this special birth hundreds of years before it occurred. This Child was called "Mighty God" and "Everlasting Father" reflecting the fact that God Himself was to come to earth in a human body.

Isaiah 9vs6 For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

This Child, born in Bethlehem into a poor family, was God in a body of flesh, His name was Jesus. Through Him, peace and goodwill was now possible between God and individual sinful people whom God would separate for Himself. Unlike all other people who had been born as a result of the seed of sinful men and were therefore all sinners, Jesus was born from the pure and holy Seed of God and was therefore born into this world free from sin. He was not of the sinful bloodline of the first created man, Adam. He was born the Son of God.

Jesus was completely man in that he had a spirit, soul and body but He was also God for He was born from the Seed of God and His spirit was fully joined with the Holy Spirit. In this sense the Bible refers to Jesus as the Son of Man and also the Son of God. Jesus, although human in form, was divine in nature. Though tempted like any

other person, being of divine nature He lived His life free from sin. He was pure in heart and He was one mind with God, consistently and always thinking and living according to the perfect will of God. The Holy Spirit was within Him to teach, guide and help Him.

God's plan to save sinful people had to enable us to retain the dominion He had given us over the earth when he first created man and woman and also retain the free will we have possessed from the day we were created. Even though we had separated ourselves from God through our choice, still the freedom for us to choose had to remain.

God's plan to reconcile people to Himself, as foretold through the prophets in the Old Testament, would be for Him to come down to earth and take on a physical body. In a physical body, God could take on our form and take on the dominion He had given people over the earth at creation. Being God, He would be able to live a life that was completely free from sin, something that was totally impossible for a naturally sinful person to live. As man, Jesus could take upon Himself the punishment that was due to come upon all people.

The Bible tells us that Jesus grew in stature and wisdom and waited until the right time, God's time, to commence His ministry. Even as a young child He astounded scriptural scholars with His understanding of the Scriptures. When the right time came, Jesus went to be baptized in the river Jordan by John the Baptist. At this point the Holy Spirit came upon Him in a powerful way to empower Him for the ministry that lay ahead of Him.

Jesus spent about thirty years preparing Himself so that He could commence a ministry that would only last just over three years. Yet in that short period of time He would accomplish more than any other person who has ever lived. Near the start of His ministry, Jesus went into the synagogue and read from the Jewish Scriptures (the Old Testament) advising the people that those scriptures that had been written so long ago, foretold of Him. The gospel of Luke states that Jesus read out loud the following words from the Old Testament Scripture (Isaiah 61).

Luke4vs18 " The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. " Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, " Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. "

Jesus was empowered with the Holy Spirit to preach to the people that were spiritually poor about the good news of the kingdom of God and the way that they could enter into it. He also came to give heart to those who were despondent about their spiritual plight, freeing them from the spiritual captivity and oppression of Satan's rule and enabling people to see God's truth. He demonstrated the power of the kingdom of God by performing various miracles and His clear authority over Satan and evil spirits.

The religious people of His day were astounded because He forgave people's sins. No man could ever forgive sins, only God could, yet Jesus openly proclaimed forgiveness. Being God, Jesus was able to forgive sins. He had the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to touch people's lives to convict them, heal them and deliver them. He was able to command the forces of nature by calming the wind and the waves. Jesus also made it clear that He was not just another prophet or teacher by calling God His Father, by stating that when people looked at Him they saw the Father, by raising people from the dead and by telling people that He was the way, the truth and the life and no person could go to God other than through Him. Just before His death, Jesus talked about eternal life and the way to receive it.

John14vs1 " Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know. " 5 Thomas said to Him, " Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way? " 6 Jesus said to him, " I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. 7 " If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him. "

Even though Jesus performed so many miracles and had great spiritual insight and wisdom in His teaching, the religious leaders of the day, the Pharisees and Sadducees, were against Him due to their jealousy, His accusations against them and His popularity amongst the crowds who gathered around Him. They also were upset in the way that Jesus made Himself equal with God. At the start of His ministry, Satan tempted Jesus with all he could offer to try to get Jesus to follow Him. With Jesus' steadfast refusal to yield to temptation, Satan had willing hearts and minds in these religious leaders to try to stop the ministry of Jesus in some other way.

When the time was right, Jesus prepared Himself for the great physical, mental and emotional pain He would have to endure through His sacrificial death. He prayed to the Father knowing that His death was necessary to fulfill the eternal purpose of God.

John12vs 27 " Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ` Father, save Me from this hour ' ? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify Your name. " ...31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. " 33 This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

Jesus continued His prayer to the Father saying that He had accomplished all the work He had been sent to do and that He had now been given authority over all people to give to some eternal life. He was now ready to go to the cross to fully accomplish the eternal plan of God and go back to regain the full glory He originally had with His Father before the creation of the world.

John17vs1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: " Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true

God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."

What the people did not realize was that Jesus was born into this world according to God's eternal plan. Even though Jesus' birth, life and death had been written in the Scriptures that the religious leaders studied so closely with their mind, they were spiritually blind to the fulfillment of God's plan which was unfolding before their eyes. He was destined to suffer and die even though He was innocent of any wrongdoing.

This was the purpose of God, for while we were sinners, God in His grace, mercy and love took the punishment that should have been ours on Himself so that we could be righteous in His sight and be reconciled to Him. Jesus, by dying for human sin endured the wrath of God that should have been upon us. Charles Spurgeon spoke of the sacrificial death of Jesus in the following revealing way.

*The blaze of eternal wrath for human sin was focused upon His head! The anguish that must have been endured by Him who stood in the place of millions of sinners, to be judged of God and stricken in their stead, is altogether inconceivable.*⁷

By the shedding of Christ's blood, sinners who believe in Him are able to be justified before God and reconciled to Him.

Romans 5vs6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

The one through whom the world had been created came down to His creation and His people did not recognize Him or accept Him. Instead they persecuted Him and nailed Him to a cross.

John 1vs 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Jesus is the only Seed from which new spiritual life can sprout for people (John 3vs3-7), and His blood is the only blood that has the capacity to cleanse the sins of people and satisfy God's demand for justice.

The world has many people who are willing to accept Jesus Christ as a great moral

teacher and are even happy to quote His sayings or try to live by the teachings He spoke, yet they are unwilling to accept Him as the Son of God. C.S. Lewis talks about these people in this way:

*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. He would be either a lunatic - on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. ...let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.*⁸

We are born as fleshly people, spiritually dead to God and people who live in a physical body, focusing on the material realm. However, when sinful people have a heart-held belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus, as far as God is concerned, we cut our link with past sinful generations of people and become spiritually alive to Him. We become reconciled to God, breaking our link to Adam and instead are now linked to Jesus. Through the perfect life of Jesus, God accepts us as having a right standing before Him.

2Corinthians5vs 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

7. Spurgeon C.H., 1834-1892, Sermon #1527 Perfect Sanctification.

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