

## Who is Jesus?

One of the most daunting questions of all history was asked at Jesus' trial before Pilate, "What is truth?" (John 18:38) No immediate answer was given, probably because Jesus had already made an earthshaking proclamation about what truth really is. Just a few days before He had declared that He not only knew the truth but was Himself the truth. In John 14:6 He stated that He Himself not only was the truth, but also the way and the life. Other great religious leaders, philosophers, and thinkers have proclaimed that they can expound on the truth, point out the way, and explain life. However, no other teacher or prophet has ever been bold enough to actually declare himself--not just his teachings--as literal truth, the only way to God, and life itself. One renown atheist, in an attempt to discredit the claims of Jesus, came to the conclusion that Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. There can be no middle ground when considering Jesus. Since He made such extravagant claims as being the only way to God (John 14:6), He cannot be considered as just another good teacher. If he lied about one thing, there is no way to decipher the rest of His teachings, whether they might also be untrue. If he was lying about His unique roll in connecting with God, then nothing else He said can be trusted. Perhaps, He wasn't trying to deceive anyone--maybe He was the one who was deceived. In that case, He was a lunatic to think such grandiose things about Himself and is, therefore, an unreliable source for instruction. The one other option is to consider that what He said was really true. In that case, He really is the Lord and must be recognized and revered as such.

In one of the best loved passages of the scripture, Jesus explains how an individual can come into a relationship with Him in order to become a recipient of the way, truth, and life which is only accessible in Him. When the religious leader, Nicodemus, came to Him, Jesus explained that he needed to experience a spiritual rebirth (John 3:5), a literal transformation from the inside out. The Apostle Paul, one of the most eloquent writers to discuss this spiritual regeneration, phrased it this way: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (II Corinthians 5:17)

This new birth does away with the old guilt, sins, and evil nature which have ruined our lives, and it gives us an opportunity to start over fresh with a clean slate as far as God is concerned. Of course, our human records are not automatically expunged, and we will still suffer some of the consequences of our previous wrongdoings. However, we no longer have to face these consequences alone--the very Lord of the universe is working with us and in us to help us deal with these challenges and problems.

Paul explained that there are two simple steps to receiving this new birth relationship with Christ. He said that we must confess; we must unashamedly declare that we have accepted Jesus as lord of our lives. We have to come to the place that we recognize that He is not a liar or a lunatic and that He is more than just a good moral teacher or great historical figure. We must make the declaration that Jesus is not only the lord of the universe, but also of our individual lives--including all our actions, thoughts, and ambitions. Paul also

added that we must believe it from our hearts, the very core of our personalities. He is not talking about just mental ascent which may change as we are exposed to other teachings; rather, he is talking about an acceptance of the reality of Jesus' lordship over our lives which emanates from the very deepest level of our personalities, a belief that will not change and cannot be shaken no matter what may come.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)

This kind of confession and faith will bring us into a vital relationship with Christ and open new vistas of hope and expectation for us. Of course, the total transformation is not automatic. Jesus purposely chose the terminology of birth to describe this experience because of the word picture it presents. Just as a baby is a total personality and is as complete as it will ever be. For example, it is not born with just one toe and the expectation that the other nine will show up later. No, the baby has all its parts, but they must all develop to their fullest strength and usefulness over time. So it is with our newborn spirits; they are complete but need nurturing, care, and exercise to fully develop. There are several very important things which we must do to develop our spiritual man.

First is prayer. Prayer is not a reciting of any organized set of religious words. It is simply communicating with God. Take time everyday to just talk to God. Use everyday language like talking to your best friend. Tell Him all your fears, concerns, worries, and joys. Then sit quietly and listen for His response. Next is Bible study. Many people have described the Bible as God's love letter to the believer. Take time everyday to read it and meditate on what God is trying to say to you. Start with the New Testament, then go through the Psalms and Proverbs before tackling some of the other sections of the Old Testament. Don't worry if you don't understand it all the first time through; it will begin to make more and more sense as you continue to read.

Find a good church where the pastor teaches from the Bible and the people praise and worship freely. Get to know some of the folks in the church so that they can become prayer partners to help support you as you mature in your Christian life. If you can't find a good church in your area, feel free to contact me. I may be able to direct you to a church or minister in your area.

Share your new-found faith with others. You do not need to understand all the theology, all you need is to know that your life has been changed by receiving Christ. Even if you are challenged with questions you can't answer, remember that a person with a testimony is never at a loss against a person with an argument. To get started in this new spiritual life, simply pray this prayer and really believe what you are praying: Lord Jesus, I come to You today confessing that You are indeed Lord of the universe. But I ask You that You will also become Lord of my own personal life. I recognize that I have done many wrong things in my life up to this point. Though so were just mistakes, I freely admit that many of them were just plain sin. I repent for those sins and ask for Your forgiveness. I

know that You have promised that for everyone who acknowledges his sin You are faithful and just to forgive those sins and cleanse away all unrighteousness. I receive that forgiveness and cleansing and rejoice in the new life You are giving me. I receive You as lord of my life and surrender myself to You to be made new in Your image. Amen.

If you have prayed this prayer in faith, you now have a new life in Christ. Congratulations! Please visit the guest book page on this website and let me know about your decision. Also add your name to our mailing list to receive the free teaching tape.