

Who Do You Say Jesus Is? II

Lyall Johnston—May 11, 2024

Jesus asked His disciples a question: Who do people say that I am? They gave him various answers, which we'll look at in a moment. But first, let's turn to:

1-Corinthians 2, written by the Apostle Paul—there were many difficulties and problems in the Corinthian church that Paul was addressing; no small issues in some cases. He was quite severe in some of his rebukes, which were, in fact, God's rebuking the congregation through Paul.

As you can read in Heb. 12, God Himself severely rebukes us at times if we wander too far from the straight and narrow of the walk, the path, that Jesus Christ has given to us. But when we repent, we receive:

- the blessings of God
- the peace of God
- the love of God
- the mercy of God

Of course, for the Corinthians who heard Paul's message, repented.

- What do you think that did to the Apostle Paul?
- Do you not think that even that lifted him up to know that when he was speaking the Word of God to God's people, they repented?

Because they repented, he experienced much joy, because the Word of God that Jesus Christ was giving to the congregation, or the Corinthian brethren, was successful at work. ***The Holy Spirit had convicted them of sin and they repented!***

1 Corinthians 2:1: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with superiority of speech or wisdom... [that is, the wisdom of this world, the wisdom of men] ...**in proclaiming the testimony of God to you**"—*the whole testimony of God, as much as was within him!*

There was much in Paul, which Christ had given him from the Father.

Verse 2: "For I decided not to know anything among you **except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.**"

Key statement! All of Paul's teaching, everything that we can read in the New Testament, in Paul's epistles, has a central focus. That focus is what Paul addresses here:

"...**Jesus Christ and Him crucified**"—*the foundation of every other doctrine and every other*

teaching of the Church that Jesus Christ said He would build!

Now, there was a problem with one of the other churches because perhaps they were not as diligent as those at Corinth on that occasion. But in Paul's writing to the Hebrew brethren...

The book of Hebrews is such an important book, such a valuable book, because there ***Paul outlines the ministry, the calling, the purpose of Jesus Christ and Him crucified!***

- what that has accomplished
- what is accomplished
- what is being accomplished
- what will yet to be accomplished

through that sacrifice, the crucified Jesus Christ!

It's a powerful story. We can only just touch the edges of that story. But even there, what we can see, what we can understand from this is absolutely incredible.

God is sharing the mind of Jesus Christ with us so that we can empty out what remains of the old man ***and take on the thinking and the works and the actions, just like Jesus Christ Himself did*** when He walked on the face of the earth.

Let's have a look at what was happening in the Church of the Hebrews. It's interesting that Paul is quite corrective of the brethren here, but it wasn't a matter because he was angry with them, he was concerned for them. He was concerned for their salvation because they were not growing. Let's see what he focused on; the same subject as we saw in 1-Cor. 2.

He begins Heb. 5 talking about the high priesthood. Of course, the focus of Hebrews is about the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ, the One and Only High Priest that has or gives the saints access to God the Father. He is the go-between. He has opened up the way to the heavenly realm where God the Father exists. Christ is sitting beside God the Father as High Priest.

As High Priest that He was commissioned by His Father after the order of Melchizedek, an Everlasting Priesthood into the ages of eternity. Jesus Christ will always be there as the High Priest:

- for His Family
- for His Bride
- for His Wife
 - as we communicate with the Father

- as we learn more and more about the Kingdom of God
- as we learn more and more about God's entire creation

which is absolutely more than our minds can cope with! The mind of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and what They have accomplished, what They have created.

Hebrews 5:1: "For every high priest, being taken from among men to act in behalf of men, is appointed to serve in *the* things pertaining to God in order that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; *and* he is able to deal gently... [because of this] ...with those who sin in ignorance and those who have been led astray, since he himself is also encumbered with many weaknesses" (vs 1-2).

That was the fault of the Old Covenant; the Old Covenant wasn't at fault, **but it was the weaknesses of man**, our human nature, the human nature of the people that Christ was dealing with as the Lord God of the Old Testament.

They knew they had sinned and had to offer sacrifices for their own sins, but it didn't make them gentle. It made them more considerate of the brethren, of the people that they were dealing with.

Verse 3: "And because of these *weaknesses*, he is obligated also to offer *sacrifices* for his own sins, exactly as *he does* for the people."

So, it puts Him 'in the same boat,' so to speak, doesn't it? It's you and me today.

Verse 4: "Now, no man takes the honor of *the high priesthood* upon himself, but *only* he who is called by God, in the same way as Aaron also was *called*. In this same manner also, Christ did not glorify Himself to become a High Priest, but He [God the Father] Who said to Him, **'You are My Son; today I have begotten You'**" (vs 4-5).

So here's one clue. God the Father Himself declares through the writings of Paul, as he quotes from the Old Testament, **that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He [the Father] has begotten Him!**

Yes, Jesus was begotten of Mary, His mother, a flesh and blood human being—Jesus Christ—the Lord God of the Old Testament. God the Father in the Old Testament, was called 'God Almighty.' Somehow, by Their power and their ability, God can do whatever He wants. Jesus Christ agreeing was transformed into a male sperm cell.

God the Father planted that sperm cell, which was Jesus Christ, and begot Him in the flesh. Here was Jesus Christ as a sperm cell planted within His mother Mary. This tells us something about begettal, doesn't it? *About conception!*

This was Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, as we know Him today, One Who was equal with God before this occasion, the One Who together with the One we know as the Father said:

Let Us make man in Our Own image and in Our Own likeness.

So the One Who created Adam and Eve and consequently by procreation knew that seed that was once the Almighty all powerful Jesus Christ, Lord God of the Old Testament became that tiny speck hardly visible by the eye, but that was Jesus Christ. And He was formed in His mother's body.

Because He was born of a woman, He also had human nature within Him—carnal human nature—which thanks to have great God in heaven and to Jesus Christ, that He resisted human nature to the point where He said that:

Satan is soon coming, but He has not got one thing within Him, not one spot, no stain, and no wrinkles that came from Satan on Jesus Christ.

But at the same time, being born in the flesh, what did He have to do? *He had to be perfected in the flesh!* There we have in that statement the whole Plan of God for mankind.

Everything God says, everything God is doing with you and with me and the rest of mankind, even those that have died, those that live today and have no knowledge of God, don't want to know God, not interested in God.

He is going to perfect everyone that makes the choice that they really and truly want to know the Lord God of the Old Testament, Who is none other than Christ Jesus.

Let's continue here in Hebrews because it's an important message for you and for me, something that we should take to heart and continue to work on, ***and remember that Satan continues to throw his fiery darts at us!*** He's running around like a roaring lion, seeking if he can devour you and devour me. He will never give up. Now, if we resist him and he will flee from us, but oh, will he come back.

The more closely we walk with God the Father and Jesus Christ, loving Them and loving the brethren, Satan will keep coming back and trying to upset us. He'll make all kinds of problems and difficulties for us, even the threat of death.

Yes, He has great power and many will die as you can read in Rev. 12. God will rescue a few in the end-time events, but the majority of us may well have to face becoming a martyr for Jesus Christ and for God the Father and receive a Crown of Life, and that life is ***eternal life!***

So the brief suffering that we will go through will soon be forgotten. It won't be totally forgotten, but it will be behind us. We will remember it and we will remember that because we were prepared to give our lives that we will receive that immortality.

- God will bless us with it
- God will give it to us

That's our hope!

We don't see it, ***but we have that hope because our faith is in the One Jesus Christ!***

Verse 6: "Even as He also says in another place, **'You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec.'**"

So, there is the name that Jesus has as our High Priest. He is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, and He was with the original Melchizedek. He has reclaimed that office after having qualified, after having been perfected in the flesh. Yes, Jesus needed to be, had to be perfected in the flesh, being tested in every way like you and me. Very important indeed. That's why He is our Lord and Master, our High Priest and King, the One Who gives us—or Who has given us—that instant access to God the Father, no matter where we are.

We could be hanging upside down in a well, but we still have that instant access to our God and our Father through Jesus Christ.

Verse 7: "Who, in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because *He* feared God."

Jesus the man gave up all His power, the only power that He had, all the words He spoke, and all came from the Father. He did not trust in the flesh, as He wants us to follow in His footsteps also, and not trust in the flesh, but to walk in the Spirit."

As Paul says to the Corinthians, that we ought to be having our minds filled with the captivity, or all our thoughts into the captivity of Jesus Christ, thinking along the lines of the Word of God, our relationship with God, our relationship to each other, as God would have us live it.

Verse 8: "Although He was a Son, *yet*, He learned obedience..."—*as a man!*

He became like one of us, exactly like you and me, with all the same temptations and all. ***But He resisted every last one, because He knew what it meant!***

Verse 9: "And having been perfected, He became *the* Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him, after He had been designated by God

as High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec" (vs 9-10).

Now listen here carefully, this is the point that we're making:

Verse 12: "For truly, by this time you ought to be teachers, *but instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God, and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food. **For everyone who is partaking of milk...**" (vs 12-13)—*the 'milk' teachings of Scripture!*

Important when we are newly begotten as the children of God, we need those milk teachings, those milk doctrines, just like a baby needs the milk from its mother's breast. We need the milk that comes through God's Word. We need the milk that comes through the body of Christ and the blood of Christ, those founding doctrines.

Verse 13: "For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in *the* Word of Righteousness because he is an infant"—*when we ought to be mature and growing!*

Verse 14: "**But solid food is for those who are fully grown...**"

What is this solid food? This is the main point that we want to make: ***solid food is for those who are fully grown.***

- Are you fully grown?
- Are you a young adult? teenager? child? or an infant in the faith?

It is not wrong to be an infant. How we love those little new babies, and we love to watch them growing up.

Do you not think that God the Father loves each begotten son and daughter?

- He watches us as we're growing
- He nudges us in this direction
- He nudges us in that direction
- He teaches us
- He helps us as His little children, as His babes

But the time comes when we must grow! That solid food is for those who are fully grown, through repeated practice. Yes, not bearing, but repeated practice, and you do it until you get it right.

God wants us to get it right, so He gives us time. He's given us 70 years, 80 years, 90 years, some 100 years. We just celebrated the birthday of a 100-year-old saint here locally, who has survived all kinds of disasters, shipwrecks, earthquakes, lost everything in an earthquake.

Her faith has remained solid; she is such a mature member of the Body of Christ:

“...who through repeated practice have had their senses trained to discern between good and evil” (v 14).

Hebrews 6:1: “Therefore, **advancing beyond** the beginning principles... [and he outlines them]: ...of the doctrines of Christ”

So, these are the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ. We all need them, and we’ll need from time to time to go back and renew and refresh them, because our minds kind of forget.

But we’re not going back to review them or to study them, because we’re doubting our faith or we’re doubting the teachings of God. It’s just a matter of, sometimes that look can be like just beautiful, sweet as honey, just that simple teachings, just the basic doctrines.

Verse 1: “Therefore, **advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ...**”

Here is the strong teaching, the strong meat, the steak. It’s a little tough. It hasn’t been hung long enough, and regular weather is still set in. But leave it a little longer, work on it, and it will mature to the point where the steak becomes tender, and as we practice it, we’ll be able to eat. Even with strong meat, it will be easier for us to accomplish. ***We should go on to perfection!***

What’s he saying? “**Advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines...**” which he lists:

Verse 2: “Of *the* doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of *the* resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

So, going beyond those principles and doctrines, we should go on to the perfection:

Verse 3: “And **we will do this, if indeed God permits.**”

What is Paul saying? *We will do this:*

- we will leave those basic principles
- we will advance from the foundation of those basic principles
- we will start going forward

We will continue by that, **going forward to perfection!**

- How do we learn what perfection is?
- How do we know what perfection is?
 - ✓ perfection is obedience to the Law of God
 - ✓ perfection is having the fear of God
- What does Proverbs tell us the fear of God is?

Paul tells us this was the mind of Christ: ***To hate, evil, and to love righteousness!***

How do we know that we hate evil? *Because when we see it, God’s Spirit within us is going to be flashing and warning us and telling us, ‘You need to avoid this.’*

We may even at times feel sick in heart when we see, as human beings, what we are doing to ourselves.

Matt. 16:13—this is such an important story and teaching. The question that Jesus asked of His disciples’ he had already had interaction with the baskets that had been collected.

Matthew 16:13: “Now, after coming into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus questioned His disciples, saying, **‘Whom do men declare Me, the Son of man, to be?’**”

Christ knew Who He was, but He’s asking, “...‘Whom do men declare Me, the Son of man, to be?’”

Verse 14: “And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist; and others Elijah; and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.’”

Well, Jesus was the One Who wrote the Word and gave the Word to the Prophets. And He said to them, and here’s a question, and what we need to do here is ask ourselves this question, and Jesus replied to Peter. *Jesus is asking, you and me:*

Verse 15: “He said to them, ‘But you, whom do you declare Me to be?’”

Let’s think about that. Let’s think about that and let’s see Peter’s answer:

Verse 16: “Then Simon Peter answered *and* said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered *and* said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, **for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father, Who is in heaven.**” (vs 16-17).

So, the question we can ask ourselves, you and I can say, ‘Well, Jesus, you are the Son of the living God.’

- Did we learn that from flesh and blood, from somebody else?
- Are we just repeating what Peter originally said like so many so-called Christians who are following a fake, false, phony, counterfeit Christianity?

They repeat the words, but they will not do what Jesus commands them, what Jesus is teaching them. It is so sad. *So, let’s ask ourselves:*

- Do I know that because it was God the Father through the Holy Spirit that revealed it to me; that I know, Lord Jesus Christ, that You are the Son of the living God?

- Did we learn that?
- Do we just repeat that?
- Do we understand that because we learned it from men or women?

or

- Can we substantiate within ourselves with the Word of God and God's Holy Spirit that you and I know that ***because it was revealed to us by God the Father of Whom we are as children?***

It's something we need to be concerned about. So, there's a lot more that we know and understand about Jesus Christ. But as Paul said, ***he decided to preach nothing but Christ and Him crucified!***

So, everything that he taught involved ***Christ and Him crucified, which is the key doctrine to the salvation of mankind!*** It's the key salvation to God perfecting mankind through the Church.

That's an interesting story when we understand what Paul taught the Church at Ephesus about the relationship of Christ with the Church. We can look at that at another time.

Right now I hope that we will take the time to think on this question of Jesus that He's asking you: 'People out there say You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

- Did you learn that from people?
You may have heard it, but:
- Do you now know that you are absolutely sure that you would actually stake your life on it?

That you know that Jesus Christ indeed is the Son of the living God as well as our High Priest, as well as our coming King and Savior!

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 2:1-2
- 2) Hebrews 5:1-14
- 3) Hebrews 6:1-3
- 4) Matthew 16:13-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 12
- Revelation 12

LJ:bo/po
Transcribed: 5/20/24

Copyright 2024—All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the copyright owner. This includes electronic and mechanical photocopying or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.