

The Wednesday Word, Jan. 11, 2012: Who Exactly is This Extraordinary Man, Jesus Christ?

At the centre of biblical Christianity we find, not ideas and instructions, but a person and events. Jesus is the person and the events are His doing, dying and rising again. Christ, unlike other religious leaders, didn't come here merely to tell us how to live, but as the God/Man he came to actually live, die and rise again in our place.

Throughout the ages, apart from Jesus, there have been three principal religious teachers, Buddha, Confucius and Mohammed. These men either taught on how we could improve ourselves or instructed us on what to do to find God. But Jesus wasn't part of their club. In fact He can't even be compared with any of them. When comparing these world religions the issue is not whether Buddha out-taught Jesus or whether Jesus had better things to say than Confucius. The issue is this, Jesus claimed to be God. Buddha didn't do that, nor did Mohammed nor did any of the other founders of the world's great religions. Jesus, therefore, stands apart from them all.

So was Jesus mistaken about Himself? Was He out of His depth? Was he simply nuts when he claimed that He would be the great end time Judge (Matt 25:31-46)? Was He lying when He said that if we have seen Him we have seen the Father (Jn 14:9). Was he deluded when He allowed Thomas to fall down before Him and address Him as, "My Lord and My God?" (Jn 20:28).

Although Jesus had many revolutionary things to say about ethics and outclassed all other teachers in this department, at the heart of His message He taught, not on self-improvement, but about Himself. He Himself was the message and at the heart of this message was His claim to being the man who was God. Indeed, so angered were the Jewish leaders by these frequent claims that they made plans to kill him (See John 5 and John 10:33).

At the heart of the gospel we have the man who is God. This is what sets Christianity apart from all other major religions. We are not told to do something to discover God rather, in the gospel, we see that God has spelt Himself out and declared who He is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a mysterious constitution there is in the person of Christ. He was and is the God/Man. He was one person with two natures; He was both human and divine. We have never seen anyone like Him nor, as a teacher, will we ever see His like again. He is unique and thus stands head and shoulders above all other religious teachers. Consider this:

As a man He was born thousands of years after Adam, but as God, He beheld Satan fall long before Adam was ever created (Luke 10:18).

As a man He was made (Hebrews 1:5), but as God He was the Maker of all things (John 1:3).

He was the baby in the manger yet he was the Mighty God (Isaiah 9:6).

As man he grew (Luke 2:40-52) yet as God he filled all things (Ephesians 1:23).

As man He had a mother, but as God He had no parents (Hebrews 7:3). He is without genealogy.

As man, He came after John (John 1:15) yet was before him (John 1:15).

As man He was on earth (Mark 2:10), yet at the same time He was in Heaven (John 3:13, John 1:18).

As man He was restricted to locality, yet at the same time, as God, He was Omnipresent (Matthew 28:20).

As man He was the servant (Philippians 2:7), but as God He was the Lord (Luke 2:11).

As man He was lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:9), yet as God the angelic host were under His command (Mark 13:26-27).

As a man he prayed (John 17), but as God He answers prayer (John 14:14).

As man He knew weakness (John 4:6), yet as God He was the Almighty One (Revelation 1:8)

As man He died (1 Corinthians 15:3), but as God He was the Resurrection and the life (John 11:25).

Jesus is so far beyond all other religious teachers not because His teachings were better (which they were) but because of who He is... the God/Man.

And that's the Gospel Truth!