

The Wednesday Word, July 6, 2016: Eternal Life

There are those who say that Jesus was an enlightened teacher, but not God. Well, of course, He was a brilliant teacher. Just think of His influence compared to that of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. They taught for a total of 130 years, but Jesus taught for only 3. Yet those 3 years turned the world upside down and impacted more people than did Plato and the boys put together.

But, Jesus was more than an excellent teacher; He was God manifest in the flesh. This means that He was the greatest teacher ever. And, in addition to teaching, He did things worthy of Deity. For example, He gave the gift of eternal life. Which of the other praiseworthy teachers of the past gave the gift of eternal life? Not Plato, not Socrates, not Aristotle---none of them.

And while we are considering this, let's ask, just who exactly is qualified to give eternal life? Even someone who has not read the Bible knows the answer to that one. The only one who can give eternal life is someone who has it to give. I can neither give eternal life to you nor can you give it to me....we are somewhat deficient in the eternal life department. But God is the possessor of eternal life, and if ever we are to be given it, we must be given it by God. That's why we are informed in Romans 6:23 that, whereas the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life. No one else but God can give eternal life. Moses for all his thundering could not give it, Isaiah for all his holy living couldn't give it, Jeremiah in spite of his immense compassion couldn't give it, none of the Prophets, Priests or Kings of Israel could give it, for it wasn't theirs to give.

Then along came Jesus. This man refused to be put into the category of merely a good teacher. One day, as He sat talking to His disciples about sheep and shepherding, he fixed His gaze on them and announced,

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." John 10:27-28.

Did you hear that? "I give unto my sheep eternal life and they shall never perish!" So what's He saying here ... He's saying, "I'm God." A man who is merely a good teacher, in spite of other abilities, cannot give eternal life to anyone. Only God can give eternal life, for the gift of God is eternal life-----so if Jesus is telling the truth, then He is God. I like what John Gill has to say on this subject,

"Christ gives eternal life to his sheep ----- he gives them himself, who is the true God and eternal life, and whoever has him has life; he gives them the knowledge of himself, which is life eternal; and he gives them his righteousness, which is their justification of life, or what entitles them to eternal life; --- this is a pure gift, it is of grace, and not of works; and it is in the gift of Christ as Mediator, who has power to give it to as many as the Father has given him."

John Gill: Exposition of the Bible.

When Jesus claimed the ability to give eternal life to His sheep, He was declaring his infinite Deity. He was putting Himself on an equal footing with God! And this was a legitimate exercise on which to embark since He was the eternal God walking around in human form. However, if Christ were not the eternal God manifest in the flesh we, once more, must denounce Him as a madman or an evil worker. If He's not God, He's a fraud! Making those outlandish claims, yet having no power to back them up, qualifies him as one of the greatest kooks of all time! But if He is God, trust Him with your soul, follow Him and worship Him.

Come All Harmonious Tongues
Your noblest music bring;
"Tis Christ the everlasting God,
And Christ the man we sing.

And that's the Gospel Truth!