

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Of all the figures in history none have had as much influence or is as well known as Jesus Christ. Why is Jesus so important? Why is He so loved, respected and acknowledged as the greatest man who ever lived? Why do we count our years from the time of His birth? There is obviously something very special about Jesus. He was like no other man, and yet He never led an army, never wrote a book, and we don't even know what He looked like. What makes Him so special? To state it briefly, He was so special because He was the only man who never sinned, but He was also more than a man - He was God Himself manifested in the flesh! And to prove that He was no charlatan or deluded individual, He gave His life for every sinful person so that through His death we may be reconciled to God, and then He rose from the dead as evidence that He was Lord over sin, death and eternal damnation. In this next series of lectures we will be looking at many aspects of the Person of Jesus Christ so that we might understand just who He was, what He accomplished and how He is able to save us from our sins as individuals.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST - THE POSSIBILITIES:

In Matt.16: 13 Jesus asked His disciples a question: “...*Whom do people say the Son of Man is?*” and ever since then opinions about the person of our Lord have abounded throughout history. Realising just who Jesus Christ is and one's subsequent reaction to Him is a matter of eternal life or eternal death, so this is the most important question a person can ever ask! The Bible is very clear on who Jesus is and we will see what it has to say, but we will also look at some of the opinions that men have expressed concerning the possibilities of who He might have been. We will list the different views first and later examine each one of them.

The Biblical view of Jesus:

1. He is God revealed as a human being. He is thus both human and divine.
2. He was born of a human mother who was a virgin. He therefore did not have a human biological father.
3. As God in the flesh, He was the only human being to be without sin. This enabled Him to legally pay the penalty for sin on behalf of the human race and to redeem men back to God.
4. As proof that He had power over sin and death and as the guarantee for mankind's salvation, He rose physically from death to die no more.
5. He is coming back to be the Judge of all creation and will then establish God's rule in a sinless universe.

Heretical views of Jesus:

1. He was God but not man.
2. He was man but not God.
3. He became God when the Holy Spirit descended on him at his baptism.

4. His birth was not supernatural and he had an earthly father.
5. He was really a spirit being who simply "possessed" the body of the man Jesus.
6. He did not really die on the cross and therefore did not pay the price for humanity's sins.
7. He did not physically rise from the dead but rose as a "spirit creature".

Worldly view of Jesus:

1. He did not exist. He was only a mythological figure - an invention of the church.
2. He was just a great man - a prophet or a moral teacher but certainly not God.
3. He was deluded and only thought that he was God.
4. He was a liar who deliberately led men to think of him as God.
5. He was a fool who thought that he was God.
6. He was a demon or magician who used occult powers.
7. He died on the Cross but did not rise from the dead. He is thus still dead.
8. He did not die on the Cross but only appeared dead and afterwards revived to die later.

If the Biblical view of Jesus is correct then none of the other views stated above can be correct. Nevertheless, we will examine each and every claim or opinion that has been made in order to assess their worth or reasonableness. Non-believers often accuse Bible-believing Christians of being unreasonable in their beliefs, but we shall look at the evidence for all these claims so that we can determine whether they are reasonable or not.

The Bible presents a very clear picture of who Jesus is. There will always be people who will try to distort what it says, but when it is read intelligently and in context there can be no doubt as to its message. We will therefore examine what the Bible itself says about Jesus Christ in this series of lecture papers.