



Title: Loving Truth and Ignoring Fiction
Theme: The Divinity of Christ

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us John 1:1, 14

Biblical revelation of God about Christ

I had a friend in Christ send me a cartoon this week. In the background of this cartoon was a movie theater with a sign saying, “The Da Vinci Code.” It showed lots of people running to get in to watch the film for their own entertainment. Lying on the ground is a man that was trampled under foot with footprints leading to the theater door. The man lying on the ground had a beard and you could see two feet sticking up out of the dirt that had nail scars on them. The point I got from looking at the cartoon was that Jesus is getting stepped on and trampled down underfoot for the pleasure and greed of mankind.

I would propose to you that what you believe about Jesus Christ is determines where you are going to spend eternity. The beloved John wrote down these words spoken by Jesus Christ in His discourse with the Pharisees (John 8:13), “...You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be... (John 8:23-24).” Jesus is speaking to all who live in an attitude of unbelief, those you resist Biblical revelation of God about Christ. To reject Christ as God in the flesh is to completely reject His person and His claims about Himself. (The Expositors Bible Commentary)

Listen to what the beloved John wrote about Jesus, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us John 1:1, 14).”

In the book “The Da Vinci Code,” Dan Brown’s character, Sir Leigh Teabing has many positive things to say about Jesus Christ. He calls Jesus a great historical figure and perhaps the most inspirational leader the world has ever seen. This is nice but not pleasing to God. Muslims and Bahais consider Jesus to be a great prophet. Hindus, Buddhists and even some atheists find many of our Lord’s teachings respectable.

The Da Vinci Code makes a startling charge: that Jesus’ followers only considered our Lord to be a human being until Emperor Constantine “upgraded” His status to deity almost three hundred years after His death.

Who do you think Jesus Christ was? Was He a myth, a great man, just a wise teacher, a prophet or God who became man? Can you fulfill your Christian mandate and give a Biblical reason for the hope you have in Christ? (1 Peter 3:15)

The Christ of the Bible must be understood in both aspects, being fully man and fully God

The Christ of the Bible must be understood in both aspects, being fully man and fully God. "The Da Vinci Code" charges Emperor Constantine with omitting gospels that portrayed the human side of Christ. A simple look at the Word of God shows us this is not true. Before Constantine we have the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and they tell us this about Jesus' human traits.

Luke 2:6-7 says, "[When it came time] for the baby to be born, [Mary] gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger..."

Here we see the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, "But you, Bethlehem... though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for Me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times (Micah 5:2). " Doctor Luke gets right down to the little human details in giving us the account of the birth of Christ being perfectly human while being manifested as God in the flesh.

Jesus grew as a normal child except without sin. Dr. Luke gives us a report of those silent years when Jesus was growing to adulthood. He writes, "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52)." Wisdom (*sophia*) meaning He grew in purity of heart and life before God. As Jesus grew into manhood he was given understanding, insight, common sense, prudence and discretion. He understood the practical application in applying God's truths in different matters. He was able to grasp the great truths of life. He could see answers to problems of life and see the difference between good and evil.

In his investigation into Jesus' life on earth as being fully man, Luke took notice how Jesus grew in "stature" (*helikias*) meaning with full vigor, in normal development mentally, physically, socially and spiritually for all these are what is involved in growing to manhood. Our Lord was certainly all man.

Jesus knew what it was like to have to work. In Mark 6:3 we see the people were amazed at His teaching and knew about the miracles He had performed, yet they recognized Him as only being a carpenter.

In saying, "Isn't this the carpenter (Mark 6:3)?" The town's people were recognizing Jesus as being a common laborer like the rest of them. The people of Nazareth despised Jesus because he was a working man a common person. To Christians that is great because it means that God, when He came to earth, claimed no exemptions. He took upon Himself the common life with its difficult tasks. A man's status in birth, his fortune and pedigree have nothing to do with growing into true manhood that is pleasing to God.

Jesus became hungry and thirsty just like any man would (Matthew 4:2; John 19:28). He became tired and fatigued (Mark 4:38). He experienced sadness and sorrow (John 11:35). He became amazed (Matthew 8:10), angry (Mark 11:15-16; John 2:13-17) and apprehensive about His impending suffering (Matthew 26:38). He felt disappointment in His disciples (Matthew 26:40-45). He bled and died a physical death (John 19:33-34).

Knowing and understanding the nature of Christ being fully man brings pure joy and hope to the illuminated child of God. The Holy Spirit has brought to life in his heart the truths found in Hebrews 2:17-18, "For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted."

The nature of the work Jesus came to accomplish demanded the incarnation, the Word becoming flesh and making His dwelling among us. Jesus did this because God is merciful and the Lord is faithful, He can be relied upon. He always accomplishes His mission. His service was to make atonement for the sins of the people.

As we moved forward in the importance of knowing that Jesus was fully man and yet at the same time being fully God, it is imperative that you understand the difference of Jesus being tempted here in Hebrews 2:18 compared to man being tempted in James 1:14. James, the half brother of Jesus tells us that man is tempted by the evil desire that is within his own heart (James 1:14). He also tells us that "God cannot be tempted by evil (James 1:13)." The application for "tempted" (*peirazo*) in Hebrews 2:17 is better understood as "tested."

Meaning that God tried Jesus through adversity to prove Him genuine, thus giving us cause and all the proof we need to fully trust in Christ.

When Dr. Jay Vernon McGee was a small boy, he grew up in West Texas in a very small town that sat very close to the Brazos River. One year a winter rainstorm washed out the wooden railroad bridge that crossed the east fork. The railroad company came in and replaced the old wooden one with a steel bridge. When it was completed the railroad company brought in two huge steam engines and placed both of them on the new steel railroad bridge. They then opened their whistles and the whole town came running.

One boy asked, "What are you doing?" The engineer said, "We are testing the bridge." So the boy asked, "Do you think it will fall down?" The engineer laughed and said, "Of course it won't fall down!" Another person asked, "So, why are you doing this?" The engineer answered: "We are putting these two steam engines on the bridge to prove that it will not fall down so when the next train comes through, those riding on it will have confidence that the bridge will hold them up."

Jesus, you see, was tested to prove that He was who He claimed to be and it is very important that He, being fully man was tested and He being fully God withstood all tests thrown at Him, even in His obedience unto death.

The Holy Spirit moved through the author of the Book of Hebrews to tell us about the hope we can have in Christ. He writes, "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16) The Word "help" (*boetheo*) in Hebrews 2:18 means "To run on the hearing of a cry, to give immediate assistance." Jesus is alive at this moment standing at God's right hand interceding for every believer in Christ at this very moment. (Truths found in portion of the message came from prayerful study of the NIV Bible; Thru the Bible; The Expositors Bible Commentary; Vines Amplified Dictionary; The Complete Word Study Dictionary; Practical Word Studies; Word Meanings in the New Testament; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; Daily Study Bible Series; Analytical Lexicon of the Greek; Dictionary of Biblical Languages)

Listen to His claims of who He is

Because Jesus became fully man to give His life to redeem fallen man from eternal separation from God, everyone should listen to His claims of who He is.

Last week we looked at the "Reliability of the Scriptures." The gospels hold the claims of Christ regarding His Divinity. What are His claims in comparison to the Da Vinci Code's allegation that it was men in Emperor Constantine's time that upgraded the Lord's status to deity almost three hundred years after the death of Christ?

Jesus makes a powerful claim about Himself in the Gospel of John 8:58, "I tell you the truth,... before Abraham was born, I am!" Jesus is no doubt proclaiming His deity. "Was born" (*ginomai*) is better translated as "became." This Greek word is often used when referring the birth of a person. When used as an active verb it speaks of a person that is entering into a new state or condition of existence. This is the word that is used in our key text today, "The Word became (*ginomai*) flesh... (John 1:14)." It can be translated as "The Word was born flesh."

The words "I am" implies continuous existence, including existence when Abraham appeared or was born. Remember the Holy Spirit gives us this truth, "...the Word was God (John 1:1)." Christ is the living, incarnate Word of God and the beloved John's writings are some of the most profound, wonderful works penned through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In writing "In the beginning was the Word" John is speaking of Jesus' as being eternal. In writing "He was with God" John is referring to the personality of Christ. And in writing, "He was God" John is speaking of Jesus' Deity.

The Bible gives many titles or names to Jesus and when He is called the "Word" we are reminded of His role in the Godhead from the beginning. Therefore, Jesus is God in the flesh expressing Himself to the world through Christ. The gospel of John tells us, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known." (John 1:18) The life and words of Jesus are more than an announcement; they are an explanation of God's attitude toward men and of His purpose for them.

Christ spoke to Phillip directly on the truths of His divinity. Phillip had said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.' Jesus answered: 'Don't you know Me, Phillip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me, who is doing His work. Believe Me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me...' (John 14:8-9)

Phillip had seen a greater revelation of God than Moses and Isaiah. He had seen face to face God in the flesh and had been with Him and walked in His very presence for three years.

Jesus claims that to know Him is to know God. When the Pharisees challenged the validity of Jesus' testimony about Himself He said, "'You do not know Me or My Father,' Jesus replied. 'If you knew Me, you would know My Father also.'" (John 8:19) Bluntly, Jesus told the Pharisees how He knew of their ignorance of God. The tragedy here is that all through history God had made the way for them to recognize His Son when He came; but they had become so involved in their own ideas, so intent on their own way, so sure of their own conception of what religion was that they had become blind to the true God, thus missing His visitation upon the earth.

So it is with many today who claim to have belief in God. They are so involved in what they are doing, so sure of their own conception of religion that is based on traditionalism, legalism, denominationalism, faddism and worldliness that they miss worshipping the Christ of the Bible.

Jesus claims that He should be honored just as much as God. John 5:23 says, "all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father..." The Greek word for "honor" (*timao*) here means to give the same reverence to Christ as you would to God, the very same honor that is to be given to a Supreme Being.

Jesus claims, "He who hates Me hates My Father as well (John 15:23)." The implication is that to hate Jesus is to hate God and this stresses the great divide that is between Jesus and the world, as matter of fact between God and the world. One cannot attack the deity of Christ and claim to have true belief in God.

Jesus said, "I and the Father are one (John 10:30)." Here we see the individuality of two Persons in the Godhead. The Greek word for "one" (*hen*) asserts unity of equality. The Jews were quick to apprehend this statement and reacted by preparing to stone (John 10:31) Jesus for blasphemy because He, a man, had asserted that He was one with God. For them Jesus' language did not mean simply agreement of thought or purpose with God but carried an implication of deity.

In His prayer for Himself Jesus claims He had been with God in heaven before the world began and shared divine glory. Jesus prayed, "...Father, glorify Me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began (John 17:5)." Five different times in His prayer for Himself Jesus used the word "glory" or to "glorify." It is a very important word. To "glorify" (*doxazo*) means to recognize Him for Who and What He is, to celebrate with praise, worship and adoration. Jesus clearly asked for the same glory that God has and what He had when He was in heaven, the glory worthy of deity.

Jesus accepted worship and being called God. In John 20:28-29 we see Thomas giving Jesus Christ proper worship when he said, "...My Lord and My God!" Jesus told Thomas, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Here is the last of the testimonies that John recorded to the deity of Jesus Christ and you will never find a higher testimony to the Lord than this one made by Thomas. This testimony made by Thomas is one of the great confessions of Scripture. In light of the Resurrection, Thomas applied to Jesus the titles of the Lord (*kyrios*) and God (*theos*). In the Greek as they are used here, both Lord and God were titles of deity.

Pliny, a governor writing near the probable location of John's readers two or three decades after John, reports that Christians sing Hymns to Christ "as to [God.]"

Jesus claims He would judge the world at the end of time. In John 5:22 we read of Jesus saying, "Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son." Jesus is going to judge all men someday. Whether saved or lost, they are going to appear before Him. Christians will appear before Him at the judgment which we call the Bema seat of Christ to see whether they receive a reward (2 Corinthians 5:10). The lost will come before Him at the Great White Throne (Revelations 20:11-15). Jesus did not come to judge the first time, but He will come as judge the next time, and all judgment is committed to Him.

Considering how Jesus has full authority to judge, everyone who desires to live a repentant life should look to Him. Jesus Christ claims to have authority to forgive sin. In Mark 2:10 we read of Jesus saying, "that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"

The phrase "Son of Man" is used forty-three times as a distinctive title of Jesus being Savior. This Messianic title was used by Jesus to express his heavenly origin, earthly mission and glorious future coming. Some of our contemporary scholars spend way too much time trying to prove that Jesus is just pointing people to His human nature, but in doing so they are missing the truths of His heavenly origin and the divine dignity of Jesus centered around His manifestation in human form.

In all that Jesus did in healing the paralytic, He was showing the forgiving power that is in Him. He has the right and power here on earth to forgive sins here and now without waiting for the Day of Judgment. This is great news for those you come to Him, they can know and enjoy the benefits of His forgiveness right now.

Jesus is the way to the Father and He claims that He will hear and answer prayers that are offered for God's good purposes. Jesus said to those who are sold out to God's will, You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it (John 14:14). We must keep these words of Jesus in proper balance with what the Holy Spirit moved the beloved John to write in 1 John 5:14, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of Him."

After the Lord's resurrection, Jesus claimed that He is omnipresent. In the giving of the Great Commission Jesus said, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20)." In His teaching on the Holy Spirit who is promised to His obedient children Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him (John 14:23)." (The truths found in the portion of the message came about as I prayerfully studied the NIV Bible together with quality Bible study material: "The Expositors Bible Commentary; The Complete Word Study Dictionary; Thru the Bible; Wiersbe's Expository Outlines; Willmington's Bible Handbook; The Teacher's Commentary; Barnes Notes; William Barclay; The Exposition Commentary; The IVP Background Commentary; Tyndale Bible Dictionary; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory)

What you believe about Jesus Christ determines your final destiny

Jesus taught, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you really knew Me, you would know My Father as well. From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him (John 14:23)." Jesus is speaking to His disciples in this passage of Scripture. Through the Scriptures Christians have the claims of Christ, the one who died for their sins and His claims should be held above every other claim. This is especially true when they stand against the claims that He has made about Himself and what the entire Word of God says about Him.

British Pastor John Stott wrote, "Jesus made it very clear by word and deed that to know Him was to know God, to see Him was to see God, to believe in Him was to believe in God, to receive Him was to receive God, to reject Him was to reject God, and to honor Him was to honor God."

C.S. Lewis wrote, "Either this man was, and is, the Son of God or else a madman... You can spit on Him... or fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come to any patronizing nonsense about Him being [just] a great teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

What you believe about Jesus Christ determines your final destiny. God always gives man the opportunity to live according to his free will. The Holy Spirit offers this question. Which Jesus will you live for and serve, the Christ of the Bible or the Christ made up in the minds of fallen man? Let us pray!