

Monday Week 38 The Claims of Jesus Christ

Bible Reading: John 4: 6, 7; 13-26

Q. 149 When Jesus talked to the woman at the well who did he tell her he was?

A. Jesus said he was the Messiah.

King Richard left England to lead his army in battle. While he was gone a wicked prince ruled the land and made it hard on the people. The people longed for their king but the prince did not want him to come back. He wanted to kill Richard and become king in his place.

After a long time a strange knight came to England dressed in black. He became a hero of the people. But who was he? Just as the wicked prince was about to make himself king, the black knight appeared. He took off his helmet. The people saw that it was their beloved King Richard. They were happy to be freed from the wicked prince and have their true king back.

People who met Jesus didn't always know who he really was. The woman at the well knew he was something of a prophet. Jesus told her that he was more than a prophet. He told her that he was the Messiah – the promised one. She was so happy that she told her whole town about Jesus.

Thinking Deeper

When Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, he claimed that all the things prophesied about the Messiah either had been or would be fulfilled in him. For the woman at the well that meant he would tell her what she needed to know about what was important: “He will tell us all things.” The coming Messiah would tell her about herself and about her relationship with God. She already had religious tradition – “our fathers worshipped in this mountain” – but she needed the reality of the Messiah’s message. It was not unimportant for her that he was born in Bethlehem, or that he had the proper lineage, or that he came at the promised time. She wanted to hear from the true Messiah. But the message for her was what she really needed.

When Jesus said “I that speak unto you am he,” it suddenly dawned on her that he had been telling her exactly what she needed to know about herself and about her need for true worship. He really was the Messiah!

Tuesday Week 38 The Claims of Jesus Christ

Bible Reading: John 5:5-19

Q. 150 Who did Jesus tell the Jews that he was?

A. Jesus said God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

Two United States Presidents had sons who also became Presidents. John Adams was the second President. His son, John Quincy Adams, was the sixth President of the United States. George H. W. Bush was the forty-first President. George W. Bush was elected as the forty-third President.

Sons will often follow in their father's footsteps and do the same kinds of jobs their fathers did. For example, farmers' sons tend to be farmers. Missionaries' sons tend to become missionaries. Carpenters' sons tend to become carpenters. When Jesus healed the sick man, he said he was doing what his Father was doing. Some people who heard him say that became angry. They did not believe that God was Jesus' Father. Jesus knew who he was. God was his Father and he worked with God.

Thinking Deeper

In some criminal trials significant witnesses turn up dead. The witness knows enough that his testimony would be so convincing that the defendant's only hope is to kill the witness. When Jesus healed the man who had been sick for 38 years, the Jews could not argue with the evidence that a mighty miracle had happened. What they did argue about was that the miracle was done on the Sabbath, violating their concept of the law of God. So they wanted to kill Jesus. Jesus made matters worse for them. He not only healed on the Sabbath, but also claimed that he was working with his Father on the Sabbath. The Jews understood exactly what Jesus meant – if God was his Father, then Jesus was deity.

Some skeptics hold the view that Jesus never claimed to be God. Their argument comes from willful ignorance. The Jews wanted to stone Jesus for that exact claim. Jesus claimed that God was his Father, "making himself equal with God."

Wednesday Week 38 The Claims of Jesus Christ

Bible Reading: John 6:47-63

Q. 151 Who did Jesus tell the disciples he was?

A. Jesus said that he was the bread from heaven that if anyone ate, he would live forever.

Cannibals are uncivilized heathens who sometimes eat other people. When they hear about Jesus they realize how sinful they are. God's miracle of salvation has changed many cannibals. Some become loving Christians, completely different than they were before. When Jesus told his disciples that he was bread from heaven that they should eat, he did not mean they should become cannibals. He meant that they should invite Jesus into their hearts and lives and live for him.

As we Christians eat the communion bread, we do not eat the literal body of Jesus. We are remembering what Jesus did for us. We remember that we've asked Jesus to come into our hearts. We remember that since he is in our hearts we have eternal life.

Thinking Deeper

C. S. Lewis came to faith partly as a result of logic regarding the claims of Christ. Lewis realized that Jesus really did claim to be the Son of God and man's way to heaven. His logic went like this: Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. That claim is either true or false. If it is false, there are only two options – either Jesus knew his claims were false and he was a liar, or he didn't know his claims were false and he was a lunatic. If the claims are true then Jesus is Lord. Lewis examined the three options. Jesus is either Lord, liar, or lunatic.*

When Lewis studied the life of Jesus, he found no evidence that Jesus was a madman. Neither did he see that Jesus was a deliberate liar. He was forced by logic to conclude that Jesus is indeed the Lord of heaven and earth, the divine Son of God.

*This argument, known as the Trilemma, is developed in Josh McDowell's *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*

Thursday Week 38 The Claims of Jesus Christ

Bible Reading: John 14:1-7

Q. 152 When Jesus spoke to Thomas, who did he claim to be?

A. Jesus said he was the only way to the Father.

Some young ladies were driving on Interstate 70 intending to go from the Indiana border to Columbus, Ohio. After they had driven a while, one of them noticed the road sign. "Oh, no! We've been going in the wrong direction!" They had been going west instead of east. They had to turn around and go the other direction. If they hadn't, they would have never gotten to Columbus.

Jesus said that he was the only way to the Father. There are many other ways people live their lives, but no way will lead to God except one way. Jesus is that one way. There is good news for those who are on the wrong way. They can turn around and follow Jesus. When Jesus found people going the wrong way, he called to them, "Follow me," said Jesus. Those who follow Jesus find the true way to God.

Thinking Deeper

Jesus not only claimed to be the way to God but also claimed that he was the only way to God. He is not one among several ways. He is the One Way.

A Christian was talking with a proponent of the Bahai faith about the claims of Christ. The Bahai follower believed that each age had its prophet. Moses was God's man in his day, Jesus in his day, Mohammed in his day and Bahu-Allah most recently. The Christian said that Jesus had to be removed from the list. "Why?" asked the Bahai follower. "Because Jesus said he was the only way," answered the Christian. "If Jesus is only one among many who can get people to God, then Jesus was a liar. So he couldn't be part of that list."

The Bahai follower refused to believe that Jesus actually claimed to be the only way. He did so out of ignorance. The claims of Christ are clear. His disciples understood how exclusive his claims were. Peter proclaimed "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Friday Week 38 The Claims of Jesus Christ

Review the Week's Questions

- Q. 149 When Jesus talked to the woman at the well who did he tell her he was?
A. Jesus said he was the Messiah.
- Q. 150 Who did Jesus tell the Jews that he was?
A. Jesus said God was his Father, making himself equal with God.
- Q. 151 Who did Jesus tell the disciples he was?
A. Jesus said that he was the bread from heaven that if anyone ate, he would live forever.
- Q. 152 When Jesus spoke to Thomas, who did he claim to be?
A. Jesus said he was the only way to the Father.

Before airplanes were invented, a man decided to try to fly. He made some long wings that he figured would be large enough to help him fly. Then he climbed a very high tower. He strapped the wings to his arms. He was ready. He jumped off of the tower into the air and tried to flap the wings. It was too bad, because he couldn't make himself fly. He fell to his death.

When people try to find a way to God without Jesus, they always fail. No one else has the power to save us from our sins. The trouble with following other ways is that there are no other ways to salvation. Only Jesus died for our sins. Only Jesus can save us. When people follow other ways, they will find that they lead to death. "I, *even I, am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no savior" (Isaiah 43:11).

Thinking Deeper

It has been popular among intellectuals who want to be inclusive in their beliefs to add Jesus in with other historical religious figures like Moses, Confucius and Mohammed and call him a great teacher. C. S. Lewis said that Jesus has not left us with that option. He is either much more than a great teacher or he is much less. He is either Lord, or a liar or a lunatic. There is no other possibility. Lewis was so convinced that it is illogical to call Jesus merely a "great teacher" that he made this classic statement: "A man who was merely a man and said the things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on the level of a man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse."

Why was Jesus so specific about his claims? He knew the consequences. He knew that there is no other salvation. There are other beliefs, but no other salvation. There are other religious leaders, but no other savior. **Jesus is God's way for man to be saved.**

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