

What Is Jesus to You

by Ian G. North

The sermon explores the question of who Jesus is, presenting him as the perfect man, perfectly free from sin, and the perfect revelation of God.

Duration: 43:41

Scripture: Matthew 8:23

Topics: "Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by highlighting the different ways in which God spoke to the people in the past through prophets. However, in these last days, God has spoken to us through his Son, Jesus Christ. The speaker emphasizes that Jesus is the perfect revelation of God, being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. Jesus is also described as the one who upholds all things by the word of his power and who purged our sins. The sermon then transitions to the story in Matthew 8 where Jesus calms a storm while he and his disciples are in a boat. The disciples are amazed at his power and ask, 'What manner of man is this?' The speaker concludes by reflecting on the impact of Jesus' life and ministry, noting that even after 19 centuries, he remains the central figure of the human race and the leader of progress.

Transcript

In his letter to his Christian children in the faith, the Apostle John said, what kind of love is this that the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God, a child of God. I have a friend in the Sudan, his name is Naji Kunaji, and he's from the Nubian tribe in the Sudan. He's a great evangelist and servant of God.

When he was a young boy, he was kidnapped by some slave traders and sold as a slave. I met him in England, had fellowship with him, he escaped, and then in the city of Khartoum, he heard a Christian preacher, and the preacher was telling them how they could become children of God, and that was one thing that Naji Kunaji always wanted to be. He wanted to know that he could be a child of God and go to heaven when he died.

And when the preacher finished his wonderful message, he asked the group of young people, now how many of you want to be children of God and go to heaven when you die? And Naji Kunaji stood straight up. He was the first in the meeting that day as a young boy to receive Christ and become a son of God, and that could happen to someone here today. We are praying that someone right here this very day will

discover the joy and the assurance of becoming a child of God, and being able to say, I am a child of God.

Please bow with me in prayer. Lord Jesus Christ, we want to feel and experience your presence here now just as really and as powerfully as we do when we are alone in prayer with you. We want to know your power in the sanctuary, your divine energizing power touching our lives.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh, and we pray that you will perform your wonderful function of exalting and glorifying Jesus Christ. We would see Jesus as we have never seen him before, with a fullness that we have never known, to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, and then to make him known in the power of your spirit. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

Please turn with me to the gospel of Matthew. The gospel of Matthew. The title of my message this morning is, What Kind of Man? What Kind of Man? In the gospel of Matthew chapter 8, verse 23, we have a very familiar story in which Jesus Christ is found with his disciples in a little storm-tossed boat on the lake of Galilee, and reading from 23 through 27.

But Jesus, I'm sorry, verse 23, and when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves, but he was asleep. The amazing tranquility of the mind and heart of Christ, he was this little boat, not really a ship in our understanding of the word ship, and it says it was covered with the waves.

The waves were breaking right over the ship, and yet there he was sound asleep. And his disciples came to him and awoke him, saying, Lord save us, we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him? They asked the question, What manner of man is this? They had never seen that kind of spectacular display of power. It's one thing for a person to heal the sick, however you might explain that, but it's another thing for a man to stand up and command the clouds and the wind and the storm and to command the waves of the sea. And when Jesus did just that, and the wind subsided and the waves quietened, and there was a great calm, why I think those disciples with wonder-rounded eyes, in stunned amazement, looked at all this, and then they began to speak.

And the question was this, What kind of man is this? In the Greek language, what manner of man? The Greek word implies the source of origin or where he comes from. What is the origin of this man? How do you explain this man? A good question. Secular history has tried to explain the man Jesus.

What kind of man is Jesus? And the psychologists have psychoanalyzed him, the historians have studied him and given him his little box in history, and why you can open up some of the great volumes of world history and to your amazement find that Jesus has a little box there somewhere, but the secular historian cannot really account for the person of Jesus. What kind of man is this? Where does he come from? How do you explain Jesus Christ? I would like us today to answer that question, because it's the most important question in the world, and it's the most important question that you will ever have to face. And when you give your answer to this question, you commit yourself morally, spiritually, you commit yourself for time and you commit yourself for eternity.

What kind of man is this? I'd like us to answer that question by asking three other questions. The first question is the question that Jesus himself asked, and you can find it in Matthew chapter 16. It is the

question that Jesus asked of the disciples.

In verse 13, when Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And then we shall ask a second question, who does God say that Jesus Christ is? And we shall finish with the question that Jesus asked of the Pharisees, what think ye of Christ? Taking then this first question, whom do men say that I am? Many things were said about Jesus in those days. The disciples replied immediately, some say that you are John the Baptist. They thought that John the Baptist had come back to life.

Herod had already executed that great prophet and some people said, well it's the same kind of message and spirit that was in John the Baptist. Some people say you are Elijah the prophet come back to life again. Others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

Whom do men say that I am? And there were many other things said about Jesus Christ by the men of his own day, his contemporaries. For example, Nicodemus, who came to Jesus at night in John chapter 3, he said to Jesus, you are a teacher come from God. Other people said things not quite so complimentary.

Some people said he's a wine drinker and a drunkard because he was not very careful about the company he chose. And in fact, it is said that he was the friend of publicans and sinners. Other people said he has a devil.

He's mad. Why do you listen to him? What do men say about him? There was a division because of him. Some others said, how can he who heals the blind have a devil? Can the devil heal the blind? And what do men say about Jesus Christ? If you listen to what men say about Jesus Christ, you will be utterly confused and bewildered.

Some men praise him. Some men blame him. And men bring to the person of Jesus Christ, their own preconceived notions and their own moral and ethical standards.

And they apply them to Christ and they judge Jesus Christ. What do men say about Jesus Christ? Well, the centuries have passed and the character and the claims of Jesus Christ have been tested by time and other men have added their testimony. Not all of them believers.

Rousseau, the French writer, one of the architects of the French revolution, he said, if Socrates lived and died like a philosopher, Jesus lived and died like a God. So was the estimate of Rousseau. Other men have had their say.

For example, in India, I suppose even many Western people know the name Tagore. Tagore was one of India's greatest poets. And philosophers, there were two brothers.

And one of the brothers, Divyajendranath Tagore, a great Indian thinker and poet, said this about Jesus Christ. The sayings of Jesus Christ are my food and my drink. What a daring saying that is of Christ, when he says, my words shall never pass away.

Yet it has proved altogether true. They contain the truth that sustains a man at the last, even in the presence of death. This was the testimony of a great Indian philosopher to the person of Jesus Christ.

What do men say about me? Jesus asks the question, what do men say? Well, this is the evaluation that the world puts on the person of Christ. This is how the world tries to explain Jesus Christ. But the second

question comes, what does God say about Jesus Christ? And here we come to the Bible, because in the Bible we have revelation truth.

In the Bible we have saving truth. Do you mean to say that the Bible is the only true book? No, I'm not saying that. There is truth, there is natural revelation, there is truth from different sources, there is scientific truth, there is moral truth, there is proverbial truth, there is truth of different kinds, there are elements of truth in all the religions and moral codes of the world, elements of truth, but only saving truth is found in the word of God.

God has revealed what human insight and natural intuition could never grasp. God has revealed who Jesus Christ really is. Now people should listen very carefully to what the Bible says about Jesus Christ, because even here there is a lot of misunderstanding and distortion, and there are people who go about, and they are here even in the city of Atlanta, professing to use the Bible as their authority to tell you that Jesus Christ is not the eternal God, that he's something else, something less than the eternal only God.

And we need to be very sure that we understand what the Bible says about Jesus Christ. What does God say about Jesus Christ? The Bible answers that question from three points of view, and we're going to consider Jesus now as he really is. I love it in the book of Hebrews, the way the writer says, consider him.

Did you notice that several times he says, consider him. First, consider his marvelous, perfect manhood. The Bible presents Jesus Christ as perfect man.

He was man, and he attained perfection of manhood. The scriptures say he was made perfect through the things which he suffered. That is to say, he attained by his perfect obedience to his father's will, he attained perfect manhood.

And the Bible speaks of him as perfect in his manhood. In Galatians chapter 4 verse 4, it says that he was made of a woman born under the law. And so Jesus Christ submitted himself totally and absolutely to the requirements of the moral law of God.

And Jesus said, I came not to destroy the law in Matthew 5, 17. I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill the law. And he did fulfill it perfectly in his own person.

The apostles, under the control of the Holy Spirit of God, repeatedly affirmed the perfection of his manhood. And I think we can see his perfect manhood under three headings. First, we see his perfect manhood in his fellowship with his heavenly father, God the father.

Jesus said, he who sent me is with me, for I do always those things that please him. What a testimony. Perfect fellowship with God the father.

It was said of Murray McChain, the great Scottish saint, who left his impact upon England and upon our evangelical Christian world. It was said of Murray McChain, he seemed to walk in unbroken communion with the father. All that God might say that of you and me, that this person seems to walk in unbroken communion with the father.

Jesus Christ enjoyed unclouded, unbroken fellowship with his heavenly father, always continuously in perfect relationship with God the father. In Matthew 3, 17, God's voice speaks from heaven and says, thou art my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Perfect relationship with the father.

And to the father, Jesus says in John chapter 11, verses 41 and 42, Jesus says, father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. We are not always sure of that, are we, when we pray, but there was never any doubt or question in the mind of Jesus Christ. Father, I thank you that you heard me and I know that you always hear me.

Unbroken fellowship with God the father. Not only unbroken fellowship with God the father, but also the Bible presents him as totally free from sin of any kind. It is a marvelous thing to turn away from our own mixed motives, our own deceitfulness, to turn away from the ugliness of the world, which depresses and defeats and drags us down, and to turn away and look at the one man in all of history who never suffered a single moral or spiritual defeat, who was perfectly free from sin.

Oh, that we might get an eyeful of Jesus Christ today in his perfect freedom from sin. It seems that Simon Peter, almost shielding his eyes from the glory of that holiness of Christ, fell down in that little fishing boat, however uncomfortable that might have been, and said, depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man. See, in the presence of Jesus Christ, the altogether holy, perfect one, we feel our uncleanness, we feel our unworthiness.

He was perfectly free from sin. All of time has tested his character and his holiness and found him free from sin. Again, it was Murray McChain who said, a holy life is a terrible weapon in the hands of God.

And prayer it is which makes that man holy as he waits on God. Jesus knew what holiness of life really was, though he was constantly surrounded by sinners, though he was constantly in the company of defiled and defiling humanity, yet he himself, as we read in Hebrews, remained constantly free, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens, perfect in his freedom from sin. Jesus, absolutely undefiled and unspoiled by sin of any kind, was absolutely holy.

I remember as a child going to Sunday school and my Sunday school teacher telling me this truth, that Jesus Christ was sinless, and I was seven years of age at the time. I remember coming home thinking about that, and wondering how it could be possible that anyone could live to be seven years of age without committing a single sin in thought or word or deed. Seven years of age, I knew that I had sinned.

But Jesus lived not to be seven years of age, but to be 33 years of age, and in all those years, and in every 365 days of those 33 years, and in all the 24 hours of those 365 days of 33 years, and in all the minutes and seconds of that life, he never committed a single sin. And yet the Bible says he was tempted. Yes, he was tempted, it wasn't a facade, it wasn't a play that he was acting, he really was tempted.

And the Bible says in every point, well you might say he wasn't tempted with drugs as we are in our modern culture as young people, he was tempted in principle along every line of temptation that you and I could experience. And yet it says without sin. Of course they tried to accuse him of sin.

The council, the Sanhedrin, brought in their false witnesses, but they could not agree. They could not find any fault in him. His Roman judge said, I find no fault in him.

The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes could not find any sin in him. Why? Because we read in 1st Peter chapter 2 verse 22, he did no sin. Neither was guile found in his mouth.

He was perfect in every respect, perfect in wisdom, perfect in his character, perfect in his words, perfect in his thought life, perfectly man in his fellowship with God, perfectly man in his freedom from sin, and perfectly man in the marvelous fruitfulness of his life. Think of his fruitfulness. In John chapter 15 verse 1,

Jesus says, I am the true vine.

And what a fruitful vine that was planted in the soil of that province of the Roman Empire. And yet he stepped onto the platform of public life for only three years. How long have you been serving God in public relationships? How many preachers have lived a whole lifetime, but here Jesus in only three years of public ministry.

What a fruitful life. The fruitfulness of his life has been captured in these words written anonymously. While he was still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against him.

His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial.

He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, and that was his cloak. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

19 wide centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth. As has that one solitary life.

What a fruitful life. Fruitful in his words. Fruitful in his touch upon the sick.

Fruitful in his death, like a grain of wheat falling into the ground and bringing a harvest. Fruitful in his resurrection. Perfectly man in his fellowship with the father, in his freedom from sin, and in his fruitfulness.

But then the Bible also goes on to speak of Jesus Christ, not only as perfectly man, but also, secondly, as the perfect revelation of God. Hebrews chapter 1, the first three verses. Could there be a more glorious description of the deity, the Godhood of Jesus Christ, than in Hebrews chapter 1, the first three verses.

God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. What a glorious description of Jesus as the perfect revelation of God. People say, what is God like? Tell me, what is God like? Jesus said, he that has seen me has seen the Father.

Some time ago, a little child was writing some religious symbols on a piece of paper, and the little girl had filled up the paper almost, but left a gap in the middle. And somebody came and looked over her shoulder and saw these pictures and religious symbols and the blank space in the center and said, what is that space for? The little girl said, that's for that's for Jesus. Then why don't you fill it in? Oh, she said, I'm afraid I'd spoil it.

But God was not afraid to fill it in, and the result was a face that loves and feels. And when I look at the face of Jesus Christ, I see the glory of God. When I look at the tears of Jesus Christ, I see the love of God.

When I hear the words of Jesus Christ, I hear the words of God. And it is a fact of human experience that when you deepen and when you intensify the consciousness of Jesus, you deepen and you intensify the

consciousness of God. Because Jesus said, I and my Father are one.

Here we see him in Titus, in Hebrews chapter one, in the description that he is the word of God. God spoke by his son. Not only is he the word of God, but we read also that he is the creator God by whom also he made the world.

Verse three, that he is the glory of God, who being the brightness of his glory. That is a very significant word, brightness. The word is really effulgence or glory, and it's a reference to the rays that come from the sun.

If you take the rays of a sun or even the rays of a distant star and you unravel the rays, the scientists can tell you what is the nature of the sun or even that distant star by the ray. And you cannot separate the ray from the star itself. They are one.

And Jesus is the ray that comes from the divine nature of God. And when you unravel the nature of Jesus Christ, what do you find? You find the nature of God. And then not only that, he is the image of God.

We read in verse three, the express image, the word image in the Greek is a reference to the stamp or the mold that is made on a piece of molten wax. The resemblance is the same as the original article, only the substance is different. And we read that Jesus Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh, but on that sinful flesh was stamped the image of God, the same resemblance, the same nature of the divine God.

And there you have the answer to the question, who is Jesus Christ? He is the word of God. He is the power of God. He is the glory of God.

He is the image of God. He is God. What is Jesus Christ God to you? Do you worship him? Well, you might say, would he accept worship? Yes, he does.

And no Jewish person would accept worship because a Jew said, thou shalt worship only God. But Jesus accepted worship, thereby indicating that he was in himself conscious of his Godhood, Jesus Christ, the eternal God. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

John chapter one, verse one. Not only that, but God reveals Jesus Christ as perfect man, the perfect revelation of God, and third and last, God speaks of Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice for sins. The perfect sacrifice for sins.

Hebrews chapter 10, verse 11. Hebrews 10, verse 11. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering, oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

But this man, which man, what kind of man is this? This man, Jesus Christ, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, never to be repeated, never to be reenacted, one sacrifice for sins forever. Sat down on the right hand of God, indicating the acceptance of the sacrifice by God the Father. He would not have sat down on the right hand of God if the sacrifice had not been acceptable to God.

But it was a perfect sacrifice for sins, a perfect atonement once and for all, a complete sacrifice. Centuries before in Leviticus chapter 17, verse 11, God had revealed, and that is a passage to study. There the pattern is set in Leviticus chapter 17.

He says, I have given you the blood upon the altar to make an atonement for the sin of the soul. Somebody here who is plagued by guilt, somebody who has no freedom from the guilt of the past. You

ask God to forgive you, and yet there's no relief, no release.

The confession of your sin may be right, and yet no release. Perhaps you thought that by confessing your sins in some way you would perform an act that would please God and gain his approval. No, the confession of your sin in itself does not secure forgiveness.

It says if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive. Now why does it use the word just? That he might be just, the apostle Paul says, and the justifier of them which believe in Jesus. God is just in the forgiveness of sins because that sin was already dealt with fully and completely in the death of Jesus Christ.

God's perfect sacrifice for sins. Do you mean to tell me that God demands blood? What kind of God is this? Dear friend, when God gave in the Old Testament the people of Israel various sacrifices and rituals, he was preparing them and instructing them. Notice this, they did not give the sacrifice to God.

God provided the sacrifices in the Old Testament, and I remember a man saying, speaking on Good Friday concerning the cross, as he pointed back to the Old Testament sacrifices, he said, whenever a priest lifted his knife and thrust it into the heart of a sacrificial animal, God shuddered in heaven. Because every time a sacrificial animal was killed in the Old Testament, it foreshadowed that time when God himself would provide the ultimate sacrifice for the sin of the world, when God himself would take full responsibility for sin in himself. And Jesus Christ came in the fullness of time.

It was given to John to recognize him for the first time, to point him out in the crowd and to say, look, the Lamb, the Lamb of God, God's provision, God's sacrifice, who takes away the sins of the world. Whoever you are today, Jesus Christ is the mediator between you, a sinner, and a holy God. And when I come with the blood of Jesus Christ into the presence of a holy God, I cannot be refused.

That is the ground of my acceptance with God, not my earnestness, not even my repentance, not my prayers or my faith, though these are all integral to receiving that ground of my acceptance. But the ground of my acceptance is God's finished work at Calvary when God took every last one of my sins and the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. You think back over your sins.

They were all placed upon the holy head of Jesus Christ and he bore them away as far as the east is from the west. So far has he removed your transgressions from you. You are free and you are forgiven the perfect sacrifice for sins.

And lastly, who do men say that I am? Who does God say that he is? And the last question, the question that Jesus Christ himself directed to the Pharisees in Matthew chapter 22, Matthew chapter 22 verse 42, the Pharisees were gathered together, we read in verse 41, and Jesus asked them, now this is towards the end of his brief period of life, teaching them, presenting himself to them, and he's reaching the climactic point. And dear friend, if God has been dealing with you, it's to bring you to this point. This is the climax of it all when Jesus puts to you the question, what think ye of Christ? We've listened to men, we've listened to what God says, now what do you say about Jesus Christ? And Jesus is asking the question, what am I to you? What am I to you? What am I to you? It goes further than that even.

We found a ready-hearted man there in John chapter 9, the man who was born blind, and Jesus heals him completely. And you'll recall that when the man was questioned, he stood firmly and then they threw him out of the synagogue and the temple and we read in John chapter 9 verse 35, Jesus heard that they had

cast him out. And when he had found him, Jesus said to him, dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said, thou hast both seen him and it is he that talketh with thee.

And he said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him. Here are the two questions, who is Jesus Christ to you? What is Christ to you? And do you believe on that one whom you have defined? Do you really believe on him? David Livingstone, the great explorer of Africa and the man who smashed that horrible slave trade of Central Africa, David Livingstone, shortly before he died, wrote in his diary on his birthday these words, my Jesus, my King, my Lord, my life, my all, I again dedicate my whole self to thee. David Livingstone was quite clear about what Jesus Christ was to him.

And if Jesus had said to David Livingstone in the loneliness of the African jungle, what am I to you? He would have said, you are my King, you are my Lord, you are my life, you are my all. And Jesus asks you the question, what am I to you? Well, what is he to you? What do you think of him? What do you think about being justified by Jesus Christ? Justified, what does that mean? Just as if I'd never sinned. What do you think about the forgiveness that God offers you in Christ? Have you made that your very own? What do you think about Christ being formed in you? That's the great test.

Well, you might say, I've received Christ. That's not the question. You are on probation.

The question is, do you not know that Jesus Christ is in you unless you have failed to pass the test? Unless you are reprobate is the word in the King James. Literally, unless you have failed to pass the test. What is the test? What is God's divine test? The test is this Christ in you, Christ in you, the hope of glory.

And there is no other hope. The hymn writer put it, no other name, none other name, none other hiding place from guilt and shame, none beside thee. The apostle Peter put it very clearly in his day when he said, there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

Jesus said, I am the way to God. I am the truth about God. I am the life of God.

The God who only has immortality. You don't have immortality. I don't.

But when we receive God life, we become immortal in Christ. Have you passed the test? What is Christ to you? May I put the question that Jesus did to the man healed from blindness? Do you believe on the son of God? Do you really? For that man, it was a matter of life and death and it is for you too. Whoever you are, it's a matter of life and death.

How do I believe on him? What does it mean to believe on him? You say he's the son of God. You say he died for your sins. Have you committed yourself to him? What is he to you? Right now, this morning, Jesus can become real in your life.

Well, you say that's the problem. He's not real. Listen, Jesus can step right out of the pages of this book into your heart and life today.

Do you believe that? Jesus can step right out of the pages of this book and become a living, bright reality in your life. A living, bright reality to you. Jesus, the same Jesus who walked the streets of Palestine and he's waiting to come into your heart right now.

Waiting to deliver you, to forgive you, to receive you, to love you and he loves you now.

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