



Who Is Jesus?

By Dr. Henry Harbuck—AEGA President/General Overseer

I am convinced that many Bible teachers, Christian workers, and pastors today do not really know *Who Jesus is*. Was He just an “anointed Man” while on earth going around working miracles? Was He one who had “emptied Himself” of His divinity as some teachers wrongly proclaim? Or was He someone far more significant, one greater than that, and one Who chose to only “lay aside His privileges (Phil. 2:6-7—called in Greek, “the kenosis”) in glory” to unite Himself with mankind?

For many years I’ve involved myself in the study of “apologetics.” This strange word is nothing more than a word that means, “A defense of the truth and a proof of the historical content of the Gospel.” One who eagerly studies “apologetics” is often called, “an *apologist*.” Although the word seems to be an *apology* for being a Christian, it means the opposite. Writing this article is timely for me, since I am currently researching intensely the Gospel of John for the publishing of the New Millennium In-Depth Bible. Throughout most of the Gospel of John, Jesus, over-and-over again tells the Pharisees and common people Who He *really* is. But they kept on asking “Who are You?” This same question must be asked again today, “Who is Jesus?”

The question that puzzled the learned Pharisees was, “How can Jesus be God [and look like a man]?” This same question is the one single reason why Jews today cannot accept Jesus as the Messiah. The people during the time of Christ believed that God was one [and was spirit] because the declaration in Deuteronomy 6:4 had said: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” The Jews stood firmly on this Scripture, and quoted it (called, “the Shema” Deut. 6:4-9) before major Jewish Holy Days took place. However, as we look at the words Paul penned in I Timothy 2:5, we must consider another aspect: “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” Which Scripture is correct? They both are. Once we interpret Scripture accurately, it all makes sense.

Jesus is Yahweh

The sacred name “**Yahweh**” was the name by which God identified Himself to the Jewish people. He first introduced Himself to Moses in the burning bush as “**Yahweh**” (**YHWH**) when He said, “I AM WHO I AM—or *I will be what I will be*—the self-existent God.” (Exo. 3:13). His sacred name is **Yahweh** (Isa. 44:6), appearing approximately 6,823 times in the Bible. **Yahweh** is the one God, but His name was regrettably mis-translated by Monks during the Middle Ages as *Jehovah*, because of a misunderstanding of the combination of the consonants of **YHWH** and the vowels of *Adonai* (meaning “Lord”). Therefore, Jesus is the Great “**I AM.**” (God—but is also *God the Son*) This was the same claim Jesus made when a crowd picked up stones to kill Him as recorded in John 8:59 and John 10:31. He made the same claim in Mark 14:62 and John 18:5-6. Jesus also claimed equality with God when he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” But notice that the Scribes immediately responded to His claim by saying, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2:5-7).

Jesus approved of others worshiping Him as God

The Old Testament had forbidden worship of any God except the one God—**Yahweh**. The New Testament provides ample proof of this, as Barnabas and Paul followed this practice when the people in Lystra tried to worship the two of them (Acts 14:8-18). Although there are many references of Jesus permitting others to worship Him as God, a notable reference is after He had calmed the raging storm. His disciples in the boat said, “Truly, You are the Son of God.” (Matt. 14:33). This is one of the rare occasions when all the disciples made this declaration of Jesus’ deity. As found in Harbuck’s Commentary on Matthew using the New Millennial In-Depth Bible, the concise notes explain in more detail this event. NOTES: “Nearly all Jews accepted the many miracles recorded in the Old Testament involving water, such as Moses holding up his staff and the water (sea) parting, the ax-head floating on the water, and many other accounts too numerous to mention. But unknown to Christians today is that during this period, the common people held the belief that “Only God Himself could walk on *top* of the water.” Therefore, the conclusion of the disciples was, “Jesus was indeed God because He walked on *top* of the water.”

Jesus is the Messiah

When Jesus came to earth, being sent by the Father, He proclaimed Himself “God’s Messiah—or literally “the Messiah of God.” Although there were various views that existed during the time that Christ came to earth as the God-Man (Messiah), the religious teachers of this period believed the Jewish Scripture had declared that “Messiah” would be God Himself. Most significant are passages of Scripture found in Isaiah 9:6, where Isaiah refers to the “Messiah” as the “Mighty God.” Also the psalmist refers to the “Messiah” when he says, “Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever (Psa. 45:6)”.

Jesus is God because He permits us to pray in His Name

Throughout the Gospel of John Jesus explains Who He is and also His relationship with the Father. He asked the people and the religious leaders to accept and believe in—[that is, trust in, rely upon, and have faith in] Him. In John 14:13-14 Jesus says we should pray in His name when He said, “And I will do whatever you ask in My name.” He further says in John 15:7 “If you abide in Me and My words abide—*remain* in you, [you

may] ask whatever you desire, and it will be given [to] you.” Lastly, and most notable of all, is that Jesus said “Nobody comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6). Now, compare Isaiah 9:6 to the NT quote: “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5).

Jesus is the Son of Man

Jesus used this phrase often when describing Himself. Most Christians believe that this means “He was in a *human tent*, or that the Son of Man was *born of a woman and had a human body*.” But this is not the meaning of the phrase, *Son of Man*. Although Jesus was human in every respect, *Son of Man* is a claim to deity, because in the Old Testament, the Phrase “Son of Man” refers to His deity. The prophet Daniel said “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, [was] coming *on the clouds of heaven—or the sky!*” (Dan. 7:13). This is exactly the same claim that Jesus made when He was interrogated by the High Priest (Matt. 26:63-65). In this scenario the High Priest said to Jesus, ‘I adjure (command) You *and place You under oath to swear by—or swear in the name of* the Living God—the Almighty One that You tell us whether You are the Christ (Heb. reading—*Messiah*), the Son of God.’ (quoted from the *New Millennium In-Depth Bible*). Jesus said to him, ‘You have said it *with your own words*. I am He. But I tell you, from this time on [in the future], you will see the Son of Man seated at the right of the Power—that is, *the Almighty One*, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ (v.64 - *New Millennium In-Depth Bible—NMIB*) At this point the High Priest tore his clothes and said, ‘*See—look*, He has committed *an act of blasphemy*.’ (*New Millennium In-Depth Bible*). Furthermore, in the prophecy of Daniel chap. 7, the *Son of Man* is also called the “Ancient of Days” (v.22), a descriptive phrase that is used twice in the same passage to refer to *God the Father* (vv.9, 13). But notice that Jesus uses the same phrase often in the New Testament when referring to Himself.

Conclusion



Though it may seem contradictory that Jesus is both human and God, He stated that He was indeed God. There are many Scriptures too numerous to mention that declare what I am saying. In debate, many skeptics often say to me, “Jesus never said He was God.” They are misinformed. He said it over and over again, especially throughout the Gospel of John.

You have my permission to retain this article and use these Scriptures to convince skeptics that Jesus *really* did SAY He was God in several places in the New Testament. Remember this: “If a skeptic tries to use Scripture to prove that Jesus never said He Himself was God, then in turn, you must use Scripture—*the same measuring stick* — to prove that Jesus DID SAY He was God.’

Acknowledgement and Bibliography:

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Some of the concepts and Scriptures briefly quoted in this article were taken from the book, *The Apologetics of Jesus*, authored by Norman L. Geisler and Patrick Zukeran. It is published by Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan USA, copyright 2009.