

IS JESUS REALLY THE SON OF GOD?

(Part 1)

CHAPTER 9

If God came down to earth in the form of a human what would we expect this person to be like? In the next two chapters, we will look at the following question:

Did Jesus have the qualities and characteristics we would expect if he were really the Son of God?

I. If God became a human we would expect that person to be good (without sin).

Was Jesus without sin?

A. Jesus' followers claimed that he was without sin.

The apostles lived and traveled with Jesus for three years. They were with him every day. If Jesus had any sin in his life, they would have known it.

Peter claimed:

"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

(1 Peter 2:22)

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God..."

(1 Peter 3:18)

John claimed:

"My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."

(1 John 2:1)

"...You know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin."

(1 John 3:5)

Paul claimed:

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

(2 Corinthians 5:21)

The writer of Hebrews claimed:

"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."

(Hebrews 4:15)

"Such a high priest meets our need - one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens."

(Hebrews 7:26)

Of course, we would expect his friends to say he was good.

What did Jesus' enemies say about him?

B. Jesus' enemies claimed he was without sin.

Judas Iscariot

Judas was a friend, an apostle and a travel companion of Jesus for three years. Then Judas became an enemy. If Jesus was a sinner, Judas would have known about it and would have told everyone. However, in the end, Judas said this...

"I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood."

(Matthew 27:4)

Jewish Leaders

"The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward..." (Matthew 26:59-60)

Pilate and King Herod

"Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, and said to them, 'You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death.'"

(Luke 23:13-15)

Roman soldier

"The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, 'Surely this was a righteous man.'"

(Luke 23:47)

Pilate's wife

"While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: 'Don't have anything to do with that innocent man...'"

(Matthew 27:19)

The thief on the cross

"...But this man has done nothing wrong."

(Luke 23:41)

Jesus even stood before his enemies and asked them...

"Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?"

(John 8:46)

No one could!

Jesus' life has always been regarded as the purest in human history. Even in the religion of Islam, the *Koran* claims that Jesus was without sin.ⁱ

II. If God became a human we would expect that person to have supernatural power!

Did Jesus have supernatural power? Here is a list of some of the miracles of Jesus recorded in the Bible:

MIRACLES OF JESUS IN THE BIBLE

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|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. His mother was a virgin when he was born | Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1: 26-38, 2:1-7 |
| 2. He changed water into wine | John 2:1-11 |
| 3. He healed a Roman official's son | John 4:46-54 |
| 4. He healed a man that had an evil spirit | Mark 1:23-28; Luke 4:33-37 |
| 5. He healed Peter's mother-in-law | Matt. 8:15; Mark 1:31; Luke 4:39 |
| 6. He caused many fish to be caught | Luke 5:5-6 |
| 7. He healed a man with leprosy | Matt. 8:2-3; Mark 1:41-42 |
| 8. He healed a man who was paralyzed | Matt. 9:1-8; Mark 2:5; Luke 5:17-26 |
| 9. He healed a man with a disabled hand | Matt. 12:13; Mark 3:5; Luke 6:10 |
| 10. He healed a Roman officer's servant | Matt. 8:13; Luke 7:10 |
| 11. He brought a dead man back to life | Luke 7:11-17 |
| 12. He calmed a stormy sea | Matt. 8:26; Mark 4:39; Luke 8:24 |
| 13. He healed a man with many demons | Matt. 8:32; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:33 |
| 14. He healed a woman with internal bleeding | Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:29; Luke 8:44 |
| 15. He gave life to a girl who was dead | Matt. 9:25; Mark 5:42; Luke 8:55 |
| 16. He healed two blind men | Matt. 9:27-31 |
| 17. He healed a man who could not talk | Matt. 9:32-33 |
| 18. He healed a man who was disabled | John 5:1-9 |
| 19. He fed 5,000 people | Mt.14:19; Mk.6:41; Lk.9:16; Jn.6:11 |
| 20. He walked on the sea | Matt. 14:25; Mark 6:48; John 6:19 |
| 21. He healed a girl with an evil spirit | Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30 |
| 22. He healed a deaf man | Mark 7:31-35 |
| 23. He fed 4,000 people | Matt. 15:29-39; Mark 8:1-10 |
| 24. He healed a blind man at Bethsaida | Mark 8:22-25 |
| 25. He healed a man who had been born blind | John 9:1-7 |
| 26. He healed a boy with an evil spirit | Matt. 17:18; Mark 9:25; Luke 9:42 |
| 27. Catching a fish with a coin in its mouth | Matt. 17:24-27 |
| 28. He healed a blind man with an evil spirit | Matt. 12:22; Luke 11:14 |
| 29. He healed a woman with an 18-year illness | Luke 13:10-13 |
| 30. He healed a man with a bad disease | Luke 14:1-4 |
| 31. He healed 10 men with leprosy | Luke 17:11-19 |
| 32. He raised Lazarus from the dead | John 11:1-44 |
| 33. He healed a blind man near Jericho | Luke 18:35-43 |
| 34. He healed another blind man | Mark 10:46-52 |
| 35. He caused a fig tree to dry up | Matt. 21:19; Mark 11:12-21 |
| 36. He healed a cut ear | Luke 22:49-51 |
| 37. He was resurrected from the dead | Mt. 28; Mk.16; Lk. 24; Jn. 20-21 |
| 38. He caused many fish to be caught again | John 21:4-6 |

The apostle John wrote, “*Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*” (John 20:30-31)

Jesus’ miracles demonstrate power over nature, power over evil, power over demons, power over sickness, power over disease and power over death!

What did the enemies of Jesus say about his miracles?

“...‘*What are we accomplishing?’ they asked. ‘Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him...’”*
(John 11:47-48)

Even early Jewish, Roman and Islamic writers wrote about Jesus' ability to do miracles.

(A.D.95) Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrnanus wrote about Jesus' "*magic arts.*"ⁱⁱ

(A.D.95 - 110) The Jewish Sanhedrin (the Jewish religious leaders) wrote that "*Jesus practiced magic...*"ⁱⁱⁱ

(A.D.361-363) The Roman Emperor, Julian (in his writing against Christianity) wrote about Jesus’ ability to “*heal disabled and blind people and cause demons to leave people...*”^{iv}

The *Koran* speaks of Jesus' ability to perform miracles.^v Also, the *Koran*, written six hundred years after Jesus, speaks about his virgin birth.^{vi}

Again, it is important to point out that the New Testament books were being circulated while eyewitnesses were still living. If these miracles did not really happen, someone could have easily said, “*I was there and I’m telling you that Jesus did not perform a miracle!*” However, no eyewitness ever said this and no one ever denied Jesus’ power to do miracles!

III. If God became a human we would expect this person to have a great influence on history!

- Jesus has been the most influential, famous and important person in history for almost twenty centuries.
- Two thousand years after his life on earth he is the center of the largest religion in the world.
- The Church that he founded has become the largest institution in the history of the world.
- Today, two billion people call themselves his followers.
- He is looked upon as a prophet or “enlightened one” by nearly every major world religion.

Consider the life of Jesus (as one writer put it)...

“Born in an obscure village, he was the child of a peasant woman. Growing up in another out of the way and disdained village, he worked in a carpenter shop until he was about thirty. Then for three years, he was a preacher who both talked and listened. He helped people whenever he could. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never went to college. He never had a family of his own or owned a home. He never traveled over 200 miles from the place where he was born. He never did any of the things that usually accompany greatness and had no credentials but himself.

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 a mockery of a trial, after which he was executed along with two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he owned. Only because a generous friend offered his own cemetery plot was there a place for him to be buried.

2,000 years have now come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race. The leader of the column of spiritual progress. The ultimate example of love.

It is no exaggeration to say that all the armies that have ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the kings who have ever reigned, all the congresses that have ever convened, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this Earth as that One Solitary Life.”^{vii}

Napoleon once said these words about Jesus...

"I know men and I can tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar and Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love: and at this hour millions of men and women would die for him."^{viii}

L.H. Marshall once wrote...

"The historical facts are beyond dispute. He appeared on this earth of ours nearly 2,000 years ago. Anything in the way of earthly privilege or advantage was denied to him. He was born in a stable, brought up by a peasant couple in a cottage, worked as a youth and young man at a carpenter's bench. He had no contact with any of the world's great cosmopolitan centers, or with any famous university, or with any renowned teacher. On the contrary, he lived his brief earthly life in an out-of-the-way corner of the world, amongst a subject people, in a small country commonly regarded as of no consequence. The only school he ever attended was the synagogue school at Nazareth. Quite possibly, the only text-book he ever studied was the Old Testament. He was without wealth or status. Yet, in spite of all these disadvantages and limitations, by virtue of the Spirit that was in him, he uttered a wisdom which transcends in worth that of any world-renowned philosopher, and indeed of all philosophers combined. His message has proved itself fitted to the deepest needs of all humans, irrespective of all considerations of time or place or nationality. His witness was so sublime that it has been the light of the world ever since. In view of the impact of his life upon the life of the world and of the profound and far-reaching and lasting effects which he has produced, there are few who would deny for a moment that he is the greatest Being who has ever trod on our earth."^{ix}

NOTES

ⁱ Koran, (Mary, V. 19)

ⁱⁱ Ethelbert Stauffer, *Jesus and His Story* (Translated by Richard and Clara Winston -- New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 9. Quoted in: Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands A Verdict* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 314.

ⁱⁱⁱ (Sanhedrin, 43a) Ethelbert Stauffer, *Jesus and His Story* (Translated by Richard and Clara Winston -- New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 9. Quoted in: Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands A Verdict* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 314.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Koran, (the Table V. 110).

^{vi} Koran, (Surah 19:19-21).

^{vii} Rubel Shelly, *Prepare to Answer* (Nashville: 21st Century Christian, 1990), 184-185.

^{viii} Ravi Zacharias, *Jesus Among Other God's* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000), 149. Quoted in Henry Parry Liddon, *Liddon's Bampton Lectures 1866*, (London: Rivingtons, 1869), 148.

^{ix} L. H. Marshall, *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics*, (1947), 350-51.