

Chapter Fifteen

WHO WAS JESUS?

As he entered Jerusalem the whole city was stirred to its depths, demanding, "Who is this?" And the crowd kept answering, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

[Matthew 21:10-11]

We have examined the traditional Christian identity of Jesus. We looked at the possibility of his being God, a part of the Trinity, the Savior of mankind and the only son of God. There is very strong evidence from both the Bible and the mathematically proven verses of the Quran against every one of these definitions.

This leaves us with the question of who Jesus was. Several times we have dealt with this in passing, but this question warrants a chapter of its own.

SPECIAL SERVANT OF GOD

Clearly Jesus was not just any man. Though fully human, he was special. He was born miraculously of a virgin. He spoke with great wisdom as a newborn infant, and indeed, was a prophet from birth:

She came with him to her family, carrying him. They said, "O Mary, you have committed something gross. O descendant of Aaron, your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother unchaste." She pointed to him. They said, "How can we talk with an infant in the crib?" (The infant spoke and) said, "I am a servant of God. He has given me the scripture, and made me a prophet. He made me blessed wherever I go, and enjoined me to observe the contact prayers (Salat) and the obligatory charity (Zakat) for as long as I live. I am to obey my mother; He did not make me a disobedient rebel. And peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I get resurrected."

[Quran 19:27-33]

Unlike other messengers and prophets of God, there is no mention in the Bible or the Quran of his ever committing any sin.

He worked great miracles—even imparting life to clay birds and resurrecting the dead—by God’s leave:

Men of Israel, listen to me! Jesus the Nazorean was a man whom God sent to you with miracles, wonders and signs as his credentials. These God worked through him in your midst, as you well know.

[Acts 2:22]

The teachings he brought are among the most beautiful ever given to mankind. If we all followed what he preached, the world would be a very wonderful place—heaven on earth—and the Kingdom of God which he announced would have indeed come to our planet:

The scribe said to him: “Excellent, Teacher! You are right in saying, ‘He is the One, there is no other than He.’ Yes, ‘to love him with all our heart, with all our thoughts and with all our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves’ is worth more than any burnt offering or sacrifice.” Jesus approved the insight of this answer and told him, “You are not far from the reign of God.”

[Mark 12:32-34]

MESSIAH

Jesus was the Messiah for whom the Jews waited. Though some Bible scholars have questioned whether Jesus ever claimed to be the Messiah, it is quite clear in the Gospel of John when Jesus was speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well:

The woman said to him: “I know there is a Messiah coming.” (This term means Anointed.) “When he comes, he will tell us everything.” Jesus replied, “I who speak to you am he.”

[John 4:25-26]

Here we also see that the Messiah is defined as the Anointed one—not, as many Christians assume, Savior. The footnote for this verse in the *NEW AMERICAN BIBLE* explains that the Samaritans were not expecting a messianic king, but a prophet like Moses.

The Quran also uses the term as Anointed:

The angels said, “O Mary, God gives you good news of a Word from Him whose name shall be ‘The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary. He will be prominent in this world and in the Hereafter, and one of those closest to Me.’ ”

[Quran 3:45]

MESSENGER OF GOD

As the quote given above from Acts 2:22 shows clearly, all of the signs and miracles that Jesus manifested, “*God worked through him.*” Jesus always recognized that he had no real power of his own. What he did was the will of his Omnipotent Lord:

“I cannot do anything of myself. I judge as I hear, and my judgment is honest because I am not seeking my own will but the will of him who sent me.”

[John 5:30]

For Jesus, doing the will of God was his whole life:

*...The disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he told them: “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”
...Jesus explained to them: “Doing the will of him who sent me and bringing his work to completion is my food.”*

[John 4:31-34]

When Jesus taught, he made it clear that what he said did not come from him, but from God:

“For I have not spoken on my own; no, the Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to speak.”

[John 12:49]

“He who does not love me does not keep my words. Yet the word you hear is not mine; it comes from the Father who sent me.”

[John 14:24]

The following quote is important not only for its content, which shows that Jesus was sent by God, but also because it is in all four Gospels:

Whoever welcomes me welcomes, not me, but him who sent me.

[Matthew 10:40]

[Mark 9:37]

[Luke 9:48]

[John 13:20]

One of the clearest statements of Jesus’ mission on earth is in John:

Jesus looked up to heaven and said: “...I have made your name known to those you gave me out of the world. These men you gave me were yours; they have kept your word. Now they realize that all you gave me comes from you. I entrusted to them the message you entrusted to me, and they received it. They have

known that in truth I came from you, they have believed it was you who sent me.”

[John 17:1,6-8]

The Quran tells us that as a messenger to the Children of Israel he was to proclaim:

“I am here to confirm the previous scripture, the Torah and to revoke certain prohibitions imposed upon you. I come to you with proof from your Lord. Therefore, you shall observe God, and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord; you shall worship Him alone. This is a straight path.”

[Quran 3:50-51]

Yes, Jesus was a great sign to the world:

And (recall) the one who maintained her virginity, then we blew into her from our spirit. We rendered her and her son a sign for the whole world.

[Quran 21:91]

But it is important to realize that God has told us very clearly that Jesus is a messenger. He has also told us that we must not make distinctions among the messengers:

...(The believers) believe in God, His angels, His scripture, and His messengers: “We make no distinction among any of His messengers,” and they proclaim: “We hear and we obey. Forgive us, our Lord. To You is the ultimate destiny.”

[Quran 2:285]

One of the greatest signs God gave us through Jesus is that a human being can attain a state of absolute devotion and submission to Him. All human beings have the potential of becoming that devoted, of making ourselves that pure, of surrendering ourselves that completely to the merciful will of our Creator:

All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

[Romans 8:14]