

The Claims Of Jesus #2

Introduction. As deity incarnate, Jesus came from heaven as the image of the invisible God, the radiance of divine glory and the very image of God's substance (Matthew 1:23; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). To help humans understand His nature, role and purpose in this world, so they might discern their need for Him and the offer that He brought to the world, Jesus sometimes employed metaphors to depict himself.

John's record focuses more on the King than the kingdom and more than do the other gospel writers. In an earlier lesson, we studied three of the seven "I am" claims which John includes in his gospel. We will now consider the final four.

I. **"I Am The Good Shepherd" (John 10:11)**

- A. The shepherd was absolutely responsible for the sheep. If anything happened to a sheep, he had to produce some kind of proof that it was not his fault. To the shepherd, it was natural to risk his life in defense of his flock. The true shepherd never hesitated.
- B. A real shepherd was born to his task. He was sent out with the flock as soon as he was old enough to go; the sheep became his friends and his companions; and it became second nature to think of them before he thought of himself. A false shepherd came into the job, not as a calling, but merely as a means of making money.
- C. Jesus' point is that the man who works only for reward thinks chiefly of the money; the man who works for love thinks chiefly of the people he is trying to serve. The good shepherd is willing to lay down His life for the sheep (vss. 11, 15). He must guard the animals against wild beasts. The "hireling" flees when danger approaches (vss. 12-13).
- D. The word "good" comes from the Greek word *kalos* which means in the goodness there is a quality of loveliness.
 1. Sometimes in a town people speak of the "good" doctor.
 2. They are not only thinking of the doctor's efficiency and skill as a physician; they are thinking of his sympathy, kindness and graciousness.
- E. Jesus declared that there would be "one fold."
 1. The Lord never intended that we should be divided into many folds or churches.
 2. Christ went to the cross that He might reconcile us in one body (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4).
 3. Had He wanted two bodies surely He would have made one for the Jews and another for the Gentiles. It was God's eternal plan to bring all together in one fold.

- F. Jesus is no ordinary shepherd. Not only does He lay down His life for the sheep, but He claims that He can take it up again (vss. 17-18). This is a clear claim to the resurrection and to His divinity. He came to gather them all, Jews and Gentiles, into one flock, and to be their shepherd. This is the mission that God gave Him to accomplish.

II. **"I Am The Resurrection And The Life" (John 11:25)**

- A. Jesus states that He is the author or cause of the resurrection. This is a very expressive way of stating that the doctrine of the resurrection came from Him and the power to bring it about is His. Jesus had the power to resurrect Lazarus that day and has the power to resurrect us in the last day (1 Corinthians 15:20-29).
1. These parallel statements are quite remarkable because the second clause reinforces the first. In what is surely one of His most majestic and comforting utterances, Jesus said that He embodied the vital power to bring the dead to life. These are not mere doctrines about future events, but present realities in Jesus Himself.
 2. He was not the first to rise from the dead. The Lord had even raised others from the dead (Luke 7:11-15; 8:40-56). But He was the only one to rise and never die again! Because of this mind-boggling power, we have assurance of His promise to raise us from the dead (John 5:28-29).
- B. When we believe in Jesus, when we accept and obey what He says about God and about life and stake everything on it, in truth we are resurrected.
1. We are freed from the fear which is characteristic of the godless life.
 2. We are freed from the frustration which is characteristic of the sin-ridden life.
 3. We are freed from the futility of the Christless life.
 4. Life is raised from sin's death and becomes so rich that it cannot die but must find in death the transition to a higher life.
- C. Jesus' statement that He is the resurrection and the life is a challenge to our faith, not just fodder for debate.
1. We must believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, not man.
 2. We must believe that Jesus came to give us abundant life right now.
 3. We must believe that Jesus offers us life that never ends.
 4. Without Jesus, even our living is slow dying. With Jesus, even our dying is but an incidental interlude in our eternal living.

III. **"I Am The Way, The Truth And The Life" (John 14:6)**

- A. This was a great saying to us, but it would be greater still to a Jew who heard it for the first time. In it Jesus took three of the great basic

conceptions of Jewish religion, and made the tremendous claim that in Him all three found their full realization.

- B. The Jews talked a lot about the way in which men must walk and the ways of God (Deuteronomy 5:32-33; 31:29; Isaiah 30:21; 35:8; Psalm 27:11).
 - 1. If a person were to give you complicated directions in a strange town, chances are we would be lost in no time. But if he says, "Come, I'll take you there," that person becomes the way and we cannot miss it.
 - 2. That is what Jesus does for us. He not only gives advice and direction, but He takes us by the hand and leads us; He strengthens us and guides us personally every day. He does not tell us about the way; He is the way.
- C. The Old Testament is full of references to God's truth (Psalm 86:11; 119:30).
 - 1. Many men have told us the truth, but no man ever embodied it. If a man proposes to teach moral truth, his character makes all the difference in the world. Moral truth cannot be conveyed solely in words; it must be conveyed in example.
 - 2. That is where the greatest human teacher ultimately fails. The tremendous fact about Jesus is not simply that the statement of moral perfection finds its peak in Him; it is the fact of moral perfection finds its realization in Him.
- D. In the final analysis, what man is seeking for is life (Psalm 16:11; Proverbs 6:23; 10:17).
 - 1. His search is not for knowledge for its own sake, but what will make life worth living. Jesus offers to mankind a higher life than physical; he offers spiritual and eternal life.
 - 2. In Him alone we see what God is like; and He alone can lead men into God's presence without fear and without shame (2 Timothy 1:10).
- E. The words of Jesus are "the words of life" (John 6:68). These words offer comfort, hope and assurance. But at the same time, they restrict and warn. Thomas Kempis said, "Without the way, there is no going; without the truth, there is no knowing; without the life, there is no living ... I am the way inviolable, the truth infallible, the life unending."

IV. **"I Am The True Vine" (John 15:1)**

- A. Jesus was saying here that He was the real or genuine vine. A vine yields the proper nourishment to all the branches, whether large or small.

1. All the nourishment of each branch passes through the vine that springs from the earth. So Jesus is the source of all real strength and grace to all His disciples.
 2. He is our leader and teacher and imparts to us the grace and strength to bear the fruits of holiness. Life is in the Son (John 1:4; 1 Peter 1:23).
- B. Branches take on the nature of the vine (2 Peter 1:4). This likeness is not always evident in other figures. As Jesus continues His comparison, He states that some of His followers are lovely fruit-bearing branches while others are useless because they bear no fruit. Those that do not bear fruit are pruned away and cast into the fire.
1. God prunes the branches through His word. God's word is light, seed, bread and a sword (Psalm 119:105; Luke 8:11; Matthew 4:4; Hebrews 4:12).
 2. The word is designed to comfort, edify and convert (1 Thessalonians 4:18; Acts 28:32; Psalm 19:7). God's word prunes off the old man and we cast off sinful deeds from our lives.
- C. We are commanded to abide in Christ. We can choose whether we will or will not abide in Him. If we abide in Him, we will be fruitful. We abide in Christ and His love when we abide in His word. Faithfulness to Christ demands faithfulness to His word.
1. We must take heed at the warnings of Jesus. It is entirely possible to be a Christian whose profession lacks practice and whose words lack deeds.
 2. It is entirely possible for one to be lost who once had been saved. We must remember that uselessness invites disaster. The fruitless branch is on the way to destruction.
- D. Our knowledge of Jesus will create love for Him and love will result in obedience to Him. Our obedience in Him will insure our abiding in Him and by abiding in Him, we can bear fruit. Our fruitbearing insures that we are filling our roles in life as branches of the true vine (Ephesians 2:10; Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:11-12).

Conclusion. Jesus said in John 8:58, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." Abraham had a definite beginning in time. Jesus existed before all creation. Jehovah or Yahweh is the most important personal name for God in the Old Testament and is from the verb "to be" or "I am" (Revelation 22:13). Jesus was truly a divine being united in the one person. The eternal Logos entered a whole human nature at the supernatural conception. Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God?