Faith for Life

Lesson 5 – Jesus Christ; the Son of God

1. “Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'“ (Acts 8:36-37)
   1. The Ethiopian had listened carefully to the young man named Philip explain that Isaiah's prophecy and the rest of the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets had been fulfilled.
   2. Philip pointed out how one called Jesus of Nazareth had accomplished in his life, death and miraculous resurrection all the Jewish prophecies of old. Philip taught one could receive all of God's promised blessings through this Jesus by believing in his name, repenting of one's sins and being baptized for the remission of sins.
   3. The Ethiopian turned to Philip and asked, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” The candor of the dark man brought a quick answer from Philip, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The reply came back, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” The chariot was halted beside the road and together the two very different men walked down into the cool water.
   4. Philip immersed the Ethiopian in the water and raised him up again. Together they walked out of the water but, as the Ethiopian looked around, Philip was gone. With great joy the eunuch continued his journey home.
      1. Anyone who desires to be a partaker of the same joy and blessings that the Ethiopian eunuch enjoyed must confess as he did Jesus' identity as the Messiah, the promised Son of God. Jesus proclaimed, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32).
      2. Paul explained this confession is essential to salvation, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9).
   5. When one confesses Jesus, what is he saying he believes? To confess Jesus is to confess he is the Christ, the Messiah promised by God's prophets (John 9:22). Confessing Jesus means one believes God raised Jesus from the dead to be Lord (Rom. 10:9; Phil. 2:9-11). When one confesses Jesus he is confessing Jesus is the Son of God, that he is God (1 John 4:15). One must not only confess Jesus' deity, he must also confess Jesus' humanity that “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” (1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 7).
2. Proving Jesus' Identity
   1. Christians are not only to confess but also prove Jesus' identity to others. Jesus claimed he was the Messiah, the Lord, the Son of God and the Son of Man. But Jesus said that his claim, by itself, was not established. Jesus said, “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true” (John 5:31).
   2. One proves the truth of his claims by producing evidence to support his claims. One type of evidence to establish a claim is witnesses who verify the truth of the claim.
   3. Under the Law of Moses two or three witnesses established the truth of a matter (Deut. 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19). Jesus established his claims by the proper evidence and he pointed to the many witnesses which proved his identity (John 5:32-47).
   4. Those who proclaimed Jesus as the Son of God did not make unsupported assertions. They preached Jesus to produce faith in those who heard them. This faith was not a leap in the dark, but a faith based upon clear evidence. Believers were urged to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thes. 5:21) and to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15).
   5. What is the evidence? Who are the witnesses?
3. The Witness Of The Scriptures
   1. Our basic argument is here presented:
      1. If the particular characteristics of the person and work of Jesus Christ are such as to be beyond those of mere men, then Jesus is the Son of God.
      2. The particular characteristics of the person and work of Jesus Christ are such as to be beyond those of mere men.
      3. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
   2. Without appealing to the inspiration of the books of the New Testament we can examine them as historical documents which support the view that Jesus was a historical figure.
      1. If one rejects the historical nature of the New Testament, one must do so on some basis other than the lack of evidence. Many accept other documents as historical and accurate on much less evidence than we have in the New Testament.
      2. The textual material in support of the New Testament is far greater than that of other historical works of antiquity.
      3. There are in existence at least five thousand Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in whole or in part.
   3. The best and most important is that of the Codex Vaticanus dating about A.D. 350 and also the well-known Codex Sinaitieus. In addition to the two excellent manuscripts of the fourth century, many fragments remain of papyrus (Egyptian paper rush, paper plant used especially by the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans) copies of books of the New Testament dating from 100 to 200 years even earlier.
      1. This evidence is overwhelming that the books of the New Testament are historical documents.
   4. The Scriptures testify Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus pointed to them as a witness of His identity, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think, you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39). How?
   5. To establish that Jesus is the Son of God, one would have to show that the particular characteristics of the person and work of Jesus are such as to be beyond those of men or beings greater than men
      1. Over 1,000 years the Old Testament Scriptures were written. God's Word foretold of the coming Messiah through prophecy and type.
      2. There are over 400 direct prophecies of the promised Messiah in the Old Testament. There are also many prophetic “types,” persons and things that foreshadowed the life, death and resurrection of the Messiah.
   6. Jesus proved he was the Son of God by fulfilling all the prophecies of the Scriptures concerning the Messiah. Jesus told his disciples, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms” (Luke 24:44; Matt. 5:17-18; 26:56; Luke 4:20-21; 24:27; and John 5:39-40, 46-47).
   7. Jesus' apostles also pointed to this evidence (Acts 3:18, 24; 7:52; 10:43; 13:29; 26:22; 28:23; 1 Pet. 1:10). “As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead.’ This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,' he said” (Acts 17:2-3).
   8. Some argue Jesus either deliberately or coincidentally fulfilled the prophecies.
      1. First, many prophecies Jesus fulfilled were outside any human control such as the manner of his conception (Isa. 7:14), the time of his birth (Gen. 49:10), the place of his birth (Micah 5:2), the manner of his death (Psa. 22:16), etc.
      2. Second, one person might fulfill one or maybe two of the prophecies, but the probability of one person fulfilling over 400 prophecies is very nearly impossible.
      3. One writer estimated the probability of one man fulfilling only eight of the prophecies of the Messiah at 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (10 to the 17th power).
         1. Let's illustrate this probability.
            1. If you had 1017 silver dollars, they would cover the state of Texas two feet deep. Mark only one of the silver dollars and mix it with all the rest, blindfold a man and give him one opportunity to pick up the right marked silver dollar.
         2. Yet Jesus fulfilled all of the prophecies. The Scriptures specify so many details of the person, words and work of Jesus that the only way to reject Jesus as the Son of God is to reject the very Word of God.
4. Jesus Christ; the Son of God
   1. Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Elijah and many other key Old Testament figures could claim a special relationship with God but none could claim to be the Son of God. The unique claim of Jesus is his divinity. The Hebrew writer initiates his discussion in chapter one by emphasizing that God has spoken now in his Son (1:2) that the Son has a “better name by inheritance” (1:4) and that God himself has called the Son “God” (1:8). Our great high priest is “Jesus, the Son of God.”
   2. John 1:1 introduces us to the eternal ‘Word,” who is Jesus the Christ.
      1. The text says: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:14 affirms that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” We are taught that the Word, without ceasing to be the Word, became something in addition to His nature as Word,” namely, “flesh.”
      2. Scripture presents Jesus the Christ as being at the same time perfectly human and perfectly divine. Because of this, He was both like and unlike other men.
         1. As a man, He was born, grew, and became hungry, fatigued, emotionally exasperated, died, etc.
         2. As God, He was self-existent (John 5:26), immutable (Heb. 13:8) truth (John 14:6), love (1 John 3:16), holy (Heb. 7:26), was omnipresent (Matt. 28:20), omniscient (1 Cor. 4:5; CoI. 2:3), omnipotent (Matt. 28:18; Rev. 1:8) and, eternal (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:11; John 8:58).
   3. The apostle John, writing by means of the Holy Spirit, in the opening verse of the amazing book of JOHN, sets out his thesis statement when he says: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...” John intends to prove that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, and that this one is, therefore, Himself Deity-that HE IS GOD!
      1. John knows that it is absolutely necessary that men be brought to believe in Jesus Christ, and he knows that to this end men must have sufficient evidence.
      2. John expects men to be willing and anxious to use their reasoning powers, to weigh carefully the evidences presented, and to be brought to the conclusion demanded by the evidence.
   4. John as a witness
      1. According to John 19:35, John SAW one of the Roman soldiers take a spear and pierce the Lord’s side. John SAW the blood and water come from the Lord’s side. John says: “And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.”
      2. Thus, (1) John writes as an eyewitness, (2) in absolute assurance of the truthfulness of his message, and (3) with the distinct purpose that those who read will also come to believe. John’s purpose (and the importance of it) is beautifully set forth also in 20:30, 31.
      3. John stresses: (1) “life” is to be had in the name of Christ; (2) it is conditioned upon one’s believing in Him; (3) “believing” is produced by proper
5. The Witness Of The Resurrection
   1. The greatest witness of Jesus is his resurrection from the dead. When the Jews demanded a divine sign of Jesus' authority, Jesus pointed to his resurrection, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up ... he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said” (John 2:19-22).
   2. Jesus' first public promise of his resurrection came at the beginning of his public ministry. He spoke often of this “sign” throughout the three years he publicly taught (Matt. 16:21; 17:9, 22-23; 20:18-19; 26:32; Mark 9:10; Luke 9:22-23).
   3. Jesus' resurrection from the dead was the premier evidence used by the apostles and the focal point of their sermons. Peter preached, “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses” (Acts 2:32; cf. Acts 2:23-31; 3:15, 26; 10:40-41). Paul preached, “But God raised him from the dead” (Acts 13:30; Acts 13:34-37; 17:31). Paul explained Jesus was “declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4).
      1. 1 Cor. 15:3-8 - For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.
   4. Philip could not have preached Jesus and failed to tell of the greatest proof that Jesus was truly the Son of God. The very passage the eunuch was reading foretold of the Christ's death (Acts 8:32-33). Philip told of Jesus' cruel tortuous public death on the cross. He spoke of Jesus' burial in a sealed and guarded tomb. Philip described how on the third day the tomb was emptied and a glorious resurrected Jesus appeared alive to many witnesses.
   5. Philip also told the eunuch of Jesus' command, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). This is evident from the eunuch's express desire to be baptized, “See, here is water, what hinders me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:36).
6. Is Jesus the Christ
   1. John 21:25 - And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.
   2. He says: “Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name” (John 20:30).