

Jesus - His Miraculous Life

Certain aspects of the doctrine of Christ that has already been considered and shown to be strong evidences of His deity, His humanity, and of the unique truth of Christianity, however, there are some characteristics that need to be mentioned and others that should be emphasized once more.

Between Christ's birth and His resurrection, He lived a life of unique holiness and power. The sinless life He lived, the mighty miracles He performed, and the gracious words He spoke, all providing a matchless setting for the unparalleled claims He made, add still further to the evidence that Jesus Christ was uniquely the Son of God.

Consider the character of Christ, as manifest in His life described in the four Gospels. The Gospel writers all are concerned solely with describing the words and deeds of Jesus Christ, and everything else is incidental and contributory to that purpose. ***He is always, in every chapter, the central character and theme.***

Yet, with all this attention, *it is remarkable that two features are notably missing from these biographies, features which are invariably prominent in all other biographies of great men:*

1. There is not one line describing the human physical appearance of Jesus!
Whether He was tall or short, dark or light, heavy-set or thin, bearded or clean-shaven, we are not told. The color of His hair or His eyes, the manner of gait, the structure of His physique, the pitch of His voice - all things, usually of such interest to writers and their readers, are amazingly omitted by the Gospel authors. Medieval portraits and statues and pious descriptive forgeries notwithstanding, we actually have not the slightest knowledge today of Jesus' human appearance. We do not even know that He had what might be considered *Jewish facial characteristic*, since He was born without direct genetic connection to either Mary or Joseph.
- The reason for this reticence in describing Jesus may be twofold:
- (A) As the Son of Man, He is thus capable of identification with all men, not just with Jews or whites, or tall men or brown-eyed men or any other particular type of men.
 - (B) Man's perverse tendency to idolatry would quickly have made an idol out of His picture or image had we known what He looked like (even without this, many have made what amounts to a shrine or idol out of a "*model*" of what some have imagined he looked like).

This remarkable restraint on the part of the four Gospel writers can be explained only as a divine constraint by the Holy Spirit.

2. A second restraint, even more amazing, is a complete absence of any eulogies of Christ by the writers. Their portrait of a man absolutely perfect in word and deed and completely lacking in any slightest weakness of character, is quite unique in all literature. Yet the Gospel writers achieve this portrait by a simple factual record of what He said and did. Never do the Gospel writers pause to comment on His

perfection, to exclaim the wisdom of His words or to point out how uniquely moral and correct all of His actions were. The portrait is painted with perfect clarity and beauty, but altogether without the aid of editorial adjectives or interjections. Nothing they could possibly say by way of explanation or description could be half so effective as simply to recount the words and deeds of Jesus simply as they were, adding no comment of their own.

No one else in all history, or even in fiction, lived in such a way as did the Lord Jesus. Note the following points, among many others that might be listed:

1. Jesus was always master of every situation, taking exactly the right action to fit the circumstances, never having to seek advice before acting and never having to retract or apologize after acting.
2. Jesus never had to ask either permission, since He always spoke with authority, or for forgiveness, since He never said or did anything amiss.
3. Jesus had no consciousness of sins or shortcomings in His life, yet never conveyed any impression of pride or sanctimoniousness in His manner.
4. Jesus was never fearful of anything and could be overpoweringly bold when occasion required, and yet He was gentle and meek in the highest degree.
5. Jesus' words were always perfectly chosen to fit the need, of absolute purity and wholesomeness, never trivial or banal, always relevant and meaningful.
6. Jesus never complained about His circumstances, in spite of weariness, hunger, poverty, persecution and rejection, but instead provided continual encouragement and comfort to others.
7. Jesus was equally confident and authoritative with friends and enemies, common people or leaders, He was never flustered or confused about what to say or do, regardless of the company or circumstances.

A list such as the above could be expanded almost endlessly. It would seem that every type of person or situation confronted Jesus in some way or another in some degree, and He always responded or reacted in the most perfect way. Never do we find a situation in which we feel that anyone else could have done it better or that Christ was unduly harsh or spoke unreasonably or was at fault in any manner.

It is true that Jesus had enemies and was hated and persecuted and finally put to death. This, however, was not because of any fault in His own character, but because His very perfection illuminated and condemned the sins and hypocrisies of other men, and they could only react by opposing and, finally, crucifying Him.

Even without being told, the reader is impelled to the conviction that Jesus' life is our perfect pattern, the example we should continually seek to follow, even though we are painfully aware that we can never really attain it. We are without excuse, however, since He attained it and He is no less human than we. He is the Son of Man - man as God intended and created him to be.

Jesus, in fact, said as much. Without any semblance of conceit or boasting, He made it plain, that His life is our perfect example, and that we should follow Him. Just look at the following Scriptures:

Matthew 10:24-25 state, "*A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master.*"

Matthew 10:37-38 state, "*Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.*"

Luke 6:46 states, "*Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"*

John 10:27 states, "*My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me.*"

John 13:15 states, "*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*"

John 13:34 states, "*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*"

John 20:21 states, "*Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'*"

1 John 2:6 states, "*Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.*"

Philippians 2:5 states, "*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.*"

1 Peter 2:21-23 state, "*To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps. 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth.' When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to him who judges justly.*"

Jesus was surely the one man in all human experience who lived a perfect, sinless life. He was perfect man, truly human and yet fulfilling His humanness as no other man can do. He is thus capable of providing perfect guidance and help for us in every situation. "*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tested like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need* [Hebrews 4:15-16].

SON OF MAN

The perfect *humanity* of Christ is implied in the singularly appropriate title "*Son of Man*." This was evidently His favorite expression of Himself. He called Himself "*Son of Man*" no less than **80 times** in the four Gospels.

The title is, of course, in no sense a denial of the *deity* of Christ. He is also the *Son of God* and, in fact, He frequently used the "*Son of Man*" title itself in a way which could only be applied to God. Thus:

"...*the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins*" [Matthew 9:6];
 "...*the son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*" [Luke 19:10].
 "...*ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*" [Mark 14:62].

This title is thus itself an indication of deity! No one man could in himself represent all men; only God is capable of this. Jesus was not just *a* son of man; He was and is *the* Son of Man. That is, He is the second man, the last Adam [1 Corinthians 15:45, 47]. He is the Heir of man, the inheritor of all the promises to man.

Jesus is the perfect man - man as God intended man to be! Furthermore, He is man as we shall someday become, when "*we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*" [1 John 3:2]. It is as the Son of Man that John saw Him in the vision of His glory [Revelation 1:13].

It was as the Son of Man that He was lifted up to die on the cross [John 3:14; 12:32-34], bearing in His own body the sins of all men. The human body in which God thus became incarnate as man is the body which was laid in the tomb and which on the third day rose again from the tomb. It was in that body He ascended into heaven. Stephen said, "*Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God*" [Acts 7:56].

It is thus as the perfect, resurrected, glorified Son of Man, eternally incarnate, that the Lord Jesus Christ exists today at the right hand of the Father. It is as Son of Man that He will come again [Matthew 24:30] "*with power and great glory*" and as Son of Man that He will receive "*everlasting dominion*" [Daniel 7:14].

By His very title, therefore, with all the realms of revelation it implies, Jesus Christ also claimed to be the *Son of God*. In speaking to Nicodemus, for example, He said, "*Whoever believes in Him...[that is, in Christ Jesus]...is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son*" [John 3:18]. Many other Scriptures show that Christ frequently claimed to be, in a very unique sense, that Son of God [note, for example, John 5:25; 9:35; 11:4; etc.].

It was a matter of fact, that it was this very claim that gave His enemies the opportunity to have Him condemned to death. In the Jewish law, blasphemy was a capital offense. At His trial before the elders, chief priests and scribes, the climax came when, "*They all asked, 'Are you then the Son of God?' He replied, 'You are right in saying I am.'* Then they said, '*Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from His own lips.*'" [Luke 22:70-71].

It had been prophesied in the Old Testament that the coming Savior and Messiah would be the Son of God. In the second Psalm, David speaks of the Lord and His Anointed [that is, Messiah] in verse 2, and then quotes the Lord, in verse 7, as saying: "*I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are My Son; today I have become your Father.'*" Other Old Testament Scriptures speaking of God's unique Son include 2 Samuel 7:14; Proverbs 30:4; and others.

John the Baptist said, "*I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God*" [John 1:34]. Peter said, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*" [Matthew 16:16]. Martha said, "*Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the son of God, Who was to come into the world*" [John 11:27]. As soon as Paul the Apostle had been converted, "*At once he began to preach in the*

synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God" [Acts 9:20]. In fact, all the disciples acknowledged saying, "*Truly You are the Son of God*" [Matthew 14:33].

Even the centurion that carried out His execution said, "*Surely this man was the Son of God*" [Mark 15:39]. Demons recognized Him as such. "*More over, demons came out of many people, shouting, 'You are the Son of God!'*" [Luke 4:41]. Finally, none other than Satan himself acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God. At two of the temptations in the wilderness, he began by saying, "*If You are the Son of God . . .*" [Matthew 4:3,6]. The word "*if*" actually is better translated "*since*." It is interesting, in the light of 1 John 4:2-3, that Satan readily acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God, but refused Him recognition as the Son of Man.

It should be understood that Christ is not a Son of God in the sense that other men may be sons of God by a spiritual relationship to their heavenly Father. Men are not born as children of God; they become sons of God by being "*born again*," through the Holy Spirit [John 1:12-13; 3:3-7].

Jesus Christ, however, is the "*only begotten*" of the Father [John 1:14, 18; 3:16; 1 John 4:9]. There are at least five ways in which the Scriptures identify Him as Son of God in a special sense:

1. BY ETERNAL GENERATION.

Jesus is "*the image of the invisible God the firstborn of every creature*" Colossians 1:15]. He was a Son with the Father before the world began [John 17:5, 24]. He has been "*going forth, from everlasting*" [Micah 5:2]. Eternally, He has been in relation to the eternal Father as His son.

2. BY SPECIAL CREATION

The technical phrase "*son of God*" is applied in Scripture in a formal way only to those whose bodies have been specially formed by God, and were not produced by natural processes of human generation. Thus, in the Old Testament, angels are referred to as sons of God by creation [Genesis 6:2; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Daniel 3:25], and so was the first man Adam [Luke 3:38]. The body of Christ was also formed directly by God [Luke 1:35].

3. BY RESURRECTION

Jesus Christ was the "*beginning, the first born from the dead*" [Colossians 1:18]. Paul preached: "*We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers He has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son; today I have become your Father.'*" [Acts 13:32-33]. He has been "*declared to be the Son of God...by the resurrection from the dead.*" [Romans 1:4]. Finally, the Apostle John, introducing the final book of the Bible, identified Jesus as "*Jesus Christ . . . the first begotten from the dead.*" [Revelation 1:5].

4. BY INHERITANCE

As the son of a father's heir, in things human, so Christ is to inherit all things from the heavenly Father. He "*has been appointed heir of all things*" [Hebrews 1:2]. "*God is the builder of all things...but Christ is faithful as a Son over God's house*" [Hebrews 3:4,6].

5. BY NATURE

The phrase "*son of . . .*" is a graphic expression denoting one's nature. Thus James and John were "*sons of thunder*" [Mark 3:17]. Elymas the sorcerer was called "*son of the devil*" [Mark 3:17], Barnabas was so named by the apostles because he was "*the son of consolation*" [Acts 4:36]; etc. Jesus Christ similarly was called the "***Son of God***" because His nature was that of God. He challenged the Jews, "*What about the One Whom the Father set apart as His very Own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse Me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? Do not believe Me unless I do what My Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe Me, believe the miracles, that you may learn and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.*" [John 10:36-38].

THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST

By common consent, Jesus Christ is the greatest teacher who ever lived! Even many who reject His deity will acknowledge this. The Sermon on the Mount, the parables of the kingdom, the Olivet discourse, the glorious messages in the Gospel of John, and others, all contain wisdom and spiritual power of majesty and insight incomparably superior to any other words ever spoken.

He is the "***Wonderful Counselor***" [Isaiah 9:6]. He is the One of Whom it was prophesied that "*grace was poured into thy lips*" [Psalm 45:2]. When He preached in Nazareth, it was said that "*all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth*" [Luke 4:22].

When He concluded His Sermon on the Mount, it is recorded that "*the people were astonished at His teachings; For He taught them as One having authority, and not as one of the scribes*" [Matthew 7:28-29]. In Capernaum, "*they were astonished at His teachings, for His word was with power*" [Luke 4:32].

Even His enemies were impressed with His teachings. When officers were commissioned to arrest Him, they came back to the chief priests empty-handed, with the simple explanation, "*Never man spake like this man*" [John 7:46].

The sermons, the parables, the commandments, and the promises of Christ are an inexhaustible mine of blessing and wisdom and guidance to all who explore them. Each new reading of them yields new truth and insight not seen in previous readings. No teacher and no other teachings can compare with these.

And yet Jesus was apparently only a carpenter from an obscure village in a despised nation. He never studied in a university, nor any other school so far as we know. He never traveled more than a few miles from His home, never wrote a book or article, never taught in a school. The only ones who paid much attention to what he taught [the multitudes some- times listened and were impressed, but they soon forgot] were a motley band of unimpressive disciples, and even they missed the point on His most important teachings concerning His coming death and resurrection.

That such an obscure itinerant preacher would leave a legacy of the greatest teachings the world has ever known would seem absolutely impossible. But such is the fact! The only

explanation that makes sense at all is that He was "*a teacher come from God*" [John 3:2], and that, as He claimed, "*Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak*" [John 12:50].

THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST

A further evidence of the supernaturalness of Christ is the miracles He performed. As the "*teacher of Israel*," Nicodemus, said, "*No man can do these miracles that You do, except God be with Him*" [John 3:2]

The time and place in which Jesus lived were not characterized by superstition and gullibility, but rather by learning and skepticism. Miracles were quite as unexpected and marvelous then as the same miracles would be today. The present order of things, as ordained by God [Genesis 8:22], is one of basic uniformity, varied only on rare occasions by the supernatural when God's sovereign purpose so designs.

Even such a great and influential man as John the Baptist never performed a miracle [John 10:41]. Yet when Jesus came it is said that "*His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with diverse diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them*" [Matthew 4:24]. He sent word to John the Baptist, "*The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up*" [Matthew 11:5]. These miracles of healing were never selective, or partial, or temporary, or trivial, but were always medically or psychosomatically impossible, yet instantaneous, complete and permanent. Nor were His miracles limited to healing. Jesus transformed water into wine, impressively multiplied a small quantity of bread and fish on two different occasions, calmed a raging storm on the Sea of Galilee, walked on the water surface, caused a tree to wither away, extracted a coin from a fish, and directed a great draught of fishes into fishing nets, on two different occasions. On three different occasions, He even restored the dead to life again.

His miracles were never merely for display or frivolity. Always they had the dual purpose of satisfying some serious human need which could be met in no other way at the time and also of confirming His own authority and claims. In connection with the latter purpose, it was entirely of grace that He used miracles to vindicate His words. Men should have recognized Him through their study of the Scriptures, through the preparatory ministry of John the Baptist, and by the witness of His own life and teachings, however, because of their blindness and hardness of heart, He made it easier for them to believe by use of miracles.

Thus, it is noted that "*many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did*" [John 2:23]. He told the unbelieving Jews, "*If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not, But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works*" [John 10:38-39]. He even told His disciple Philip, "*Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the very works' sake*" [John 14:11].

On the other hand, He would not perform miracles simply to satisfy curiosity or carnality. When certain ones came seeking a sign from Him ["*signs*" and "*miracles*" are the same word in the Greek], He said, "*An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it*" [Matthew 12:39]. He refused to perform before Herod, even to save His life [Luke 23:8-9]. He knew that many would never believe regardless of miracles. "*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead*" [Luke 16:31]. Note also John 12:37, which states, "*Though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him.*"

It is therefore obvious that the Lord Jesus Christ did, on occasions, perform mighty miracles, however, it was always with clear reason and results, never for display or personal gain. The miracles that He did perform were accomplished before many different people out in the open, in crowds, and were of many different kinds. They were obviously not tricks of hypnosis or mass psychology, as some have foolishly suggested.

As a matter of fact, many were actually miracles of creation [that is, the water into wine, the multiplication of the loaves, etc.] and of resurrection. None but the Creator Himself could be competent for such mighty works as these. John, in fact, develops his whole Gospel around the framework of seven great miracles of omnipotence and, when he concludes, he says, "*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book:*

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name" [John 20:30-31].

CLAIMS OF CHRIST

In view of the sinless life, the wonderful teachings, and the mighty miracles of Christ, the claims He makes concerning His own person and mission are extremely important. A man who could accomplish such things as these can neither be dismissed as hallucinatory nor rejected as a charlatan. Neither, can the Gospel writers have been mistaken in reporting what He claimed.

Therefore, these claims must be studied carefully and regarded with utmost seriousness. They were actually made by Christ Himself and, by all rules of reason and logic, should be accepted as absolute truth. They amount "*en toto*" to an absolute and dogmatic claim that He, Jesus Christ, is Himself the eternal God. If this be so, and it is so, then a person can ignore or reject this fact only at the cost of tragic and eternal loss of his own soul.

The claims are many and varied, but all add up both individually and collectively to affirmation of His own unique deity as the eternal Son of God. A sampling of these is given below, without comment [for none is needed]:

John 14:6 "Jesus answered, `I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"

Matthew 9:6, "So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' Then He said to the paralytic, `Get up, take your mat and go home.'"

Matthew 10:32, "Whoever acknowledges Me before men, I will also acknowledge him before My Father in heaven."

Matthew 11:27, "All things have been committed to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him."

John 11:25-26, "Jesus said to her, `I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?'"

Mark 2:28, "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Luke 9:24, "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will save it."

John 8:12, "When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Luke 18:8, "I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

John 4:14, "But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 5:22, "More over, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son."

Matthew 11:28, "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

John 5:25, "I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live."

Luke 21:33, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away."

John 8:58, "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

Matthew 16:18, "I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

John 10:7-8, "Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before Me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them."

John 10:30, "I and the Father are one."

John 6:35, "Jesus declared, `I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty."

John 20:28, "Thomas said to him, `My Lord and my God!'"