

STUDY 2: God the Son – 1

INTRODUCTION

“Christianity is the only religion in the world which rests on the Person of its Founder.” Indeed “Christianity is nothing less and can be nothing more than relationship to Christ”. The true test of Christianity today is, “What do you think about the Christ” (Matthew 22:42). This is why He is the center of opposition and the object of worship in every age. It is, therefore, crucial to know what we believe about Jesus Christ for “Christianity is not a system of morals but the worship of a Person”.

In a later study we shall see why we accept the Bible as the Word of God, but for this study we assume it and use it as the authority and source book. We shall look briefly at Jesus’ life and work.

In the Beginning

Though Jesus was born physically as a baby almost two thousand years ago, He has always existed (John 17:5; 1Peter 1:20). He was with God the Father before the beginning of time. (In Genesis 1:1 the Hebrew word for God is plural – note Genesis 1:26 “us” and “our”). In John 1:1 “Before the world was created the Word (Christ) already existed” (Good News Bible). On one occasion Jesus startled His critics by stating “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). He dared to take the Divine title “I AM” (Exodus 3:14) on His lips and this outraged His enemies (John 8:59).

Christ in the Old Testament

Throughout the Old Testament the Messiah (the Christ) is promised. It is estimated that there are over 300 direct references to the coming of the Messiah (Isaiah 9:6,7) in the Old Testament, the majority have already been accurately fulfilled by Jesus, the rest relate to His Second Coming! Jesus came as a Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15,18; Matthew 21:11), Priest (Psalms 110:4; Hebrews 7:15–17, 9:11) and King (Jeremiah 23:5,6; Zechariah 9:9 and Luke 19:35; Luke 23:38). Despite many prophecies giving the precise details of Jesus’ birth (e.g. His mother would be a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:27), the place of the birth would be Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1), all were

taken by surprise (Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–28; Luke 2:1–20).

Jesus' early years

Soon after Jesus was circumcised (Luke 2:21, His life was in danger (Matthew 2:13–18) but God the Father protected Him and He grew up in obscurity for about thirty years (Luke 3:23) in Nazareth (Matthew 2:19–23) as a carpenter (Mark 6:3). We have one glimpse only of Jesus as a boy (Luke 2:41–52) but we see how His ministry (Luke 2:46) and character (Luke 2:52) were being prepared.

Jesus as the perfect man but also truly God

Jesus kept a perfect balance between His Public Ministry (when He spoke to thousands (cf. John 6 & 7)), His Social Life (especially after He chose the Twelve Apostles (Matthew 26:17–19; Mark 3:14; John 2:1–11)) and His Private Life (Mark 1:35; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 4:42; Luke 6:12).

He was truly man, e.g. tired (John 4:6), thirsty (John 4:7; John 19:28) and wept (Luke 19:41) but also truly God (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 5:8; John 1:1,14; John 10:30; John 14:6; John 20:28 etc.).

Questions

1. Why is Christianity so different to every other religion?
2. What is the crucial question to ask anyone regarding Christianity?
3. How long has Jesus existed? (Colossians 1:17)

4. In what ways was Jesus described in the Old Testament (that is, prophetically)? (cf Deuteronomy 18:15; Numbers 24:17; Isaiah 52:13; Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 9:9)

5. What was miraculous about Jesus' birth (Luke 1:27). Why was this important?

6. What two glimpses do we have of Jesus before He began His ministry? (Luke 2:2–52)

7. How was Jesus being prepared during the 30 years of obscurity? (Luke 2:46–52)