

Jesus Bible Study Series

Lesson #1 (Chapter One)

The Identity of Deity

HMR
Men's Bible Study

Main Idea

The claims about Jesus by Himself, the eyewitness accounts, and the fulfilled prophecies confirm that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Paraphrasing C.S. Lewis we must see Jesus as either *Lord, liar, or lunatic*.

Deep Thoughts

There is no doubt that the history of the world was literally changed by the arrival of Jesus. In the Western World, where Christianity has made its greatest impact, even our calendars reference His time on earth. As Christians we clearly recognize that without Christ there is no salvation and that faith in Jesus is the *litmus identifier* for the Believer. However, have you ever considered that how you live your life says more about what we believe concerning Jesus than recognizing that we will spend eternity with Him? The fundamental issue at hand concerns whether or not we are living the abundant life of which Jesus spoke (cf. John 10:10). If we are not, the reason is fairly simple – we are not abiding in Christ. If our life is best characterized as selfish, over-committed (or *improperly* committed), worried, addicted, depressed, apathetic, and disengaged, we can rest assured that this is not Jesus' idea of an abundant life.



If we have any hope at all it resides in our developing a greater understanding of *who Christ was, who He is, and who he calls us to be*. Christianity is not intended to generate a "to do" checklist of the right things. Rather, doing the right things is a by-product of developing a strong relationship with Jesus by abiding in Him (cf. John 15:5). As you and I fall in love with Jesus and develop a single-minded purpose in living, everything falls into place (cf. Matthew 6:33). Sin is the number one problem in the world. It is also the number one problem in our lives as Believers as it *takes us out of the game*. You and I do not have the capacity to stop sinning in and of ourselves; it is part of our nature. However, as we learn to abide in Christ the desire to sin will take a backseat to our desire to bring glory to God. A life wholly focused on Jesus is the only way that revival will come to our lives and the life of our nation. Any effort that is not completely focused on Jesus is destined to fail. As a healthy branch abides in the vine to which it is attached, our lives exhibit a spiritually healthy existence when we abide in Christ. We might call this the concept of the *Vine Time Enzyme*.

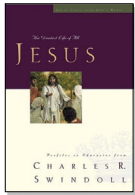
Supporting Scriptures

Read the following Scripture passages and consider how they support Jesus' claims about Himself.

- John 1:1-14
- Luke 5:17-26
- Matthew 16:13-16
- John 8:48-59

Questions for Consideration

1. What claims did Jesus make about Himself?
2. Had you been alive at the time of Jesus, what do you think you would have believed about His claim of being the Messiah? Why?
3. How is **what we do** a true reflection of **what we believe**?
4. Read C.S. Lewis' quote on page 13 and consider his commentary on Jesus' claims to be the Son of God. Assuming you conclude as I do that most Americans have not been transformed by Jesus, why do you think this is the case?



Jesus Bible Study Series

Lesson #1 (Chapter Two)

A Relationship, a Courtship, a Miracle

HMR
Men's Bible Study

Main Idea

Jesus' arrival on earth was not accompanied by great fanfare, certainly not of the magnitude that caused nations to tremble or men to fear God. His Incarnation was intended to change men's heart by demonstrating His unconditional grace and love, rather than by force and power that will be the hallmark of His Second Coming.

Deep Thoughts

For those of us who know Christ, His birth represents a special time on earth. The God of all eternity chose to become a man and live as we do, in the muck and mire of everyday life. Jesus faced challenges in living with other men and had to ensure not only man's inability to love one another, but worse yet his failure to love God.

God chose that Jesus would arrive in an insignificant manner. His mother was a young girl from Nazareth who likely came from an honorable family, but not one that would have been viewed by their community (or nation) as worthy of having God's Son. Jesus' earthly father Joseph, equally honorable as His mother, was not a wealthy man nor was he one widely recognized for any particular skills or abilities. As we see so often in history, God chooses people who have the capacity to live in awe of Him and not those who are overly impressed or preoccupied with themselves. From these humble people Jesus learned the true meaning of life and that His time on earth was not about accumulation or making a name for Himself, but rather making a name for the God He served (and the God He was).



A photograph of modern-day Nazareth as viewed from the East

Essentially, Mary and Joseph were the first Christians. They were chosen by God to be Jesus' earthly parents. They also chose to be obedient and honor God and undergo tremendous personal trials and challenges in being the parents of the most amazing person ever born to mankind. This lesson provides us with the opportunity to study how Mary and Joseph modeled faith and steadfast devotion to God in the midst of challenging times. As in all other lessons of this series, we continue to focus on *abiding in Christ by understanding who He was, who He is, and who He calls us to be.*

Supporting Scriptures

Read the following Scripture passages and consider the unique manner in which Jesus came to earth.

- Matthew 1:18-25
- Luke 1:1-38

Questions for Consideration

1. So often when we see God's work in the Bible, it is never as we would design it. Great examples include Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and certainly David. Why do you think God accomplishes His work in ways we would never imagine and against such odds?
2. Why do think God chose to send Jesus into a humble Jewish home at a time when the Romans were in power?
3. Had you been Joseph, what are some of the greatest challenges you would have faced in all of the events leading up to Jesus' birth?

Take-away Points

When and if God asked you to do the impossible, how would you respond? Is your faith so strong that your trust in God exceeds your need for personal comfort or desire for reputation? Only when we begin to model the humility, obedience, and willingness to sacrifice as observed in the lives of Mary and Joseph can we begin the rewarding journey of abiding in Christ.

At our next meeting (Tuesday, January 21) we'll cover Chapters 3 and 4 of our book.