

# Who is Jesus?

The Gospels: part 4; The Story: part 25

April 2, 2017

## **DAY 1: Who do men say that I am? Mark 8:29ff.**

1. As the three-year ministry was coming to a close and His last week of ministry loomed, Holy Week, as we call it, He asked His disciples who they knew Him to be.

*Mark 8:27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"*

*<sup>28</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."*

2. The world was grappling with this question. The more people got to know Jesus the higher “up the ladder” people thought of Him. But it never dawned on the people that God would become man! Or that man could be divine!

3. Who do some of your friends think Jesus Christ is?

4. Then Jesus asks Peter directly.

*Mark 8:29 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ."*

5. This episode was three years in the making. After seeing Jesus:

- Perform miracles of healing,
- Perform miracles that defied the laws of physics (stilling a storm, feeding the 5,000, etc.),
- Claim to be divine,
- Be the One to whom hundreds of prophecies point...

The disciples finally followed where the evidence led them—to the divinity of Jesus Christ. Peter is the one who puts words to this.

6. This week we'll look at different answers to this question, “Who am I?”

## DAY 2: "I am" statements

1. Jesus spoke in some phrases that are known as "I am" statements. Some of these are consider "**absolute**" "I am" statements and others as "**metaphorical**" "I am" statements. Here are three absolute I am statements:

*John 8:24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that **I am** [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins."*

*John 8:28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that **I am** [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me."*

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

2. What strikes you about Jesus' "I am" statements?

3. When God revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush incident, God revealed Himself with this exact terminology! (This is why the Pharisees were so indignant when Jesus used this same terminology! They knew exactly what Jesus was claiming for Himself—divinity!)

*Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

4. Here are seven metaphorical "I am" statements by Jesus:

- I am the bread of life (John 6:35, 48, 51)
- I am the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5)
- I am the door of the sheep (John 10:7, 9)
- I am the good shepherd (John 10:11, 14)
- I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
- I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
- I am the true vine (John 15:1)

5. Which of these seven metaphorical statements strikes you the most? Why?

6. The "I am" statements of Jesus draw a sharp distinction on Jesus' claim to be God! As C.S. Lewis has noted, anyone who claims to be God can be one of only three things:

- a. Liar. (He knew He wasn't God and lied anyway to get a following).
- b. Lunatic. (He only thought He was God, but was hopelessly deluded).
- c. Lord. (He claimed to be divine, and was divine).

8. To say that Jesus was not God, but was only a good teacher belies the claims of Christ. You cannot be either a liar or lunatic and still be a "good" moral man or a "good" teacher. They are mutually exclusive.

### **DAY 3: Son of man**

1. Jesus kept asserting that he was God as he kept referring to himself as “the Son of Man.”
2. In the book of Daniel, Daniel’s vision in chapter seven finds remarkable similarity to an identity of divinity, of equality with God (the Ancient of Days), given the authority, glory (reserved for God alone) and the highest sovereign power.
3. He is worshipped, and is said to be given dominion that will be eternal, a kingdom that will not be destroyed.

*Daniel 7:13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.*

*<sup>14</sup> He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

4. When we come to the gospels, there are **eighty** references to “the Son of man.”
5. The term is one that Jesus used for Himself on numerous occasions.

Here are some of the major ideas in which Jesus used “Son of man” in describing Himself:

- His authority and power (Mark 2:10; 2:28; Luke 12:19)
- His humility and being incognito (Mark 10:45; 14:21; Luke 19:10; 9:58)
- His pre-existence and His descent into our world which both concealed and manifests His glory (John 3:13 f.; 6:62 f.; 8:6 ff.)
- His role in uniting heaven and earth (John 1:51)
- Judging men and holding the messianic banquet (John 5:27; 6:27)

6. Which of the items regarding the “Son of man,” strikes you the most? Why?

(For further study: Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 16:13; 20:28; 24:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 18:8; John 1:51; 5:27; 6:53; 12:23; 13:31; Acts 7:56; Rev. 1:13).

## **DAY 4: Feeding of the 5,000**

1. This remarkable episode appears in all four gospels.

*Mark 6:35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late.*

*<sup>36</sup> Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."*

*<sup>37</sup> But he answered, "You give them something to eat."*

*They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"*

*<sup>38</sup> "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five--and two fish." <sup>39</sup> Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup> So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties.*

*<sup>41</sup> Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.*

*<sup>42</sup> They all ate and were satisfied,*

*<sup>43</sup> and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.*

*<sup>44</sup> The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.*

2. All throughout the gospels, a clear reading indicates that Jesus was no ordinary man, extraordinary man, good teacher or just a good example for us to follow.

3. What was the setting for this episode?

4. What factors led the disciples to believe their situation was impossible?

5. Why do you think Jesus "put this back on them"? (v. 37)

6. What would you have done if you had been in the group of disciples?

7. What conclusions do you draw from this episode?

## **DAY 5: Walking on water**

*Mark 6:45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.*

<sup>46</sup> *After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.*

<sup>47</sup> *When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land.*

<sup>48</sup> *He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them,*

<sup>49</sup> *but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out,*

<sup>50</sup> *because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

<sup>51</sup> *Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed,*

<sup>52</sup> *for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.*

<sup>53</sup> *When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there.*

<sup>54</sup> *As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus.*

<sup>55</sup> *They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was.*

<sup>56</sup> *And wherever he went--into villages, towns or countryside--they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.*

1. What is the setting for this episode?
2. When Jesus catches up to them on the water, what were their different responses?
3. What happened once Jesus got in the boat? What was the response of the disciples?
4. What would have been your response?
5. When Jesus got out of the boat on the other side, what did the people in the region do?
6. What did Jesus do?
7. Today, what strikes you most about Jesus?