

Essential Truths I: Living With God

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Jesus

Two thousand years ago, Jesus appeared on the scene of history. He was born into the world and grew up just like every other person, but He was no ordinary man. He was called the “Son of God” (**Luke 1:26-38**) and the “Word of God” (**John 1:1,14**). **Hebrews 1:1-2** describes the significance of the coming of Jesus into the world.

“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.”

Verse 1 – “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways...” – summarizes the whole of the Old Testament.

Verse 2 – “...but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...” – summarizes the whole of the New Testament.

The Mission of Jesus

Read Luke 19:10

Jesus was sent into the world on a “seek and save” mission. His mission was:

- To give his life as a ransom (**Matthew 20:28**)
- To destroy Satan’s works (**1 John 3:8**)
- To give us eternal life (**1 John 5:11-12; John 3:15-17**)
- To give us birth into God’s family (**John 1:12; John 3:3**)
- To restore fellowship with God (**2 Corinthians 5:18; Romans 5:1-2; 1 John 1:3**)

The Word
God
Origins

▶ **Jesus** ◀

The Cross
The Blood
Resurrection
Repentance
Grace
Faith
Water Baptism
Holy Spirit
Temptation
Fellowship
Generosity
Kingdom of God
Worship
Prayer
Eternity
Second Coming
The Call

The coming of Jesus changed our lives forever. He was the door through which heaven was opened to us (**John 10:9**).

Jesus Fulfilled Prophecy

Read 1 Peter 1:10-11

The Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah – God’s Savior. Everything in the Old Testament pointed forward to the coming of Christ. In fact, Jesus was able to say: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (**Matthew 5:17**).

Read John 5:39

The very first prophecy of the coming Savior was given right at the fall of man.

Read Genesis 3:15

God promises man that from Eve would be born a Savior. On the Cross, this promise was fulfilled. Even though the Savior’s heel was “bitten” by the serpent – an initial victory – the serpent’s head was completely “crushed” – a total and lasting victory (note **Colossians 2:15**).

The second distinct prophecy about the coming Savior was given to Abraham.

Read Genesis 22:18

Now we know that the Savior is to be born from Abraham’s line. As we progress through Scripture, the circle begins to contract and we discover that the Messiah would be born from the tribe of Judah (**Genesis 49:10**).

By the time we come to **2 Samuel 7:12-13** the circle has narrowed even further to David’s line (note also **Psalms 132:11**). In fact, the Messiah was even predicted to be born in Bethlehem (**Micah 5:2**), David’s own hometown (**1 Samuel 17:12**). This is the significance of the genealogies given at the beginning of **Matthew** and **Luke**. They are not just boring sections placed at the beginning of the Gospel accounts. They establish that Jesus was, in fact, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

The Gospel accounts contain numerous fulfillment prophecies. Let’s take a look at just a few:

Isaiah 40:3-5 ⇨ **Luke 3:1-6**

Malachi 3:1 ⇨ **Matthew 11:7-10**

Isaiah 61:1-2 ⇨ **Matthew 3:1-3; Luke 4:16-21**

Psalms 118:22-23 ⇨ **Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:17-19**

Zechariah 9:9 ⇨ **Matthew 21:1-5**

Zechariah 11:12 ⇨ **Matthew 26:14-15**

Zechariah 13:7 ⇨ **Matthew 26:31**

Isaiah 53:7 ⇨ **Matthew 27:14**

Isaiah 50:6 ⇨ **Matthew 26:67-68; 27:27-31**

Psalm 69:21 ⇨ **Matthew 27:34**

Psalm 22:1 ⇨ **Matthew 27:46**

Psalm 22:7-8 ⇨ **Matthew 27:39-44**

Psalm 22:16 ⇨ **Luke 23:33**

Psalm 22:18 ⇨ **Matthew 27:35**

Isaiah 53:9 ⇨ **John 19:38-42**

Psalm 16:10 ⇨ **Acts 2:24-32**

Even the crucifixion of Jesus was graphically portrayed in the Old Testament.

Read Psalm 22:14-18

Read Isaiah 53:5

Read Zechariah 12:10

Read Zechariah 13:6

Of the many prophecies of the coming of Jesus, none is so detailed as one whole chapter in the book of **Isaiah**.

Read Isaiah 53

Christ's life and ministry fulfilled the predictions of the prophets (**Acts 3:18**), dovetailing the Old and the New Testaments. In Christ, we see the fulfilment of the plan of salvation devised in the mind of God from the very creation of the world (note **Revelation 13:8**).

Read Luke 24:25-27

The Nature of Christ

Read John 1:1

Jesus existed before he was born. His pre-existence is established in Scripture and is testified to by none other than Jesus himself.

Read John 8:56-59

What an incredible claim: "...before Abraham was born, I am!" The words that Jesus used to describe his pre-existence, however, are loaded with meaning.

- ⇨ Firstly, Jesus did not say, "Before Abraham was born, I was." His use of the expression, "I am," indicates a ever-continuing existence outside of the bounds of time as we know it.
- ⇨ Secondly, every Jew who heard Jesus' words knew that he was claiming divinity, for the term "I am" was the covenant name of God himself. This is the meaning of the Hebrew name for God, Yahweh or Jehovah.

In **Exodus 3:14**, the Bible tells us:

"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.'"

This sacred name of God – “I AM” – was to become so revered by the people of Israel that no one would even dare utter it for fear of contravening the command of **Leviticus 24:16**. This is why Jesus declares “solemnly” (*Amplified Bible*) who he is. For when Jesus said, “...before Abraham was born, I AM,” he was in effect saying, “...before Abraham was born, I AM WHO I AM!” This meaning is brought out vividly in *The Message*:

“Believe me,’ Jesus said, ‘*I am who I am* long before Abraham was anything.’”

No wonder the Jewish leaders tried to stone Jesus! He was declaring himself to be God (note also **John 5:18**).

I am...

Read John 18:4-8

In this remarkable passage, we see the fact that although Jesus is arrested, it is only according to the prearranged plan of God (**Acts 2:23**). For when the arresting party arrest him, the power of just one simple phrase – “I am he” – is enough to send them sprawling to the ground.

Once again, Jesus has used the term, “I am.” As you read **John**, you will find that there are in fact seven declarations that Jesus makes concerning himself that begin with the phrase, “I am...”

- I am the bread of life (**6:35-40**)
- I am the light of the world (**8:12; 9:5**)
- I am the door (**10:7-9**)
- I am the good shepherd (**10:11-14**)
- I am the resurrection and the life (**11:25**)
- I am the way, the truth and the life (**14:6**)
- I am the true vine (**15:1-8**)

Jesus was not just a good teacher. He embodied the truth he was teaching. He is not just the one who shows the way; he *is* the way. He is not just the one who reveals the truth; he *is* the truth. He is not just the one who gives life; he *is* the life. He doesn't just save us; he has *become* salvation for us. He has become everything we need from God.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:30

The Root and Offspring of David

Read Revelation 5:5

Jesus is described as both the Root and the Offspring of David (**Revelation 22:16**).

Offspring of David

Read Isaiah 11:1-2

Jesus was a direct descendant of David (note **Matthew 1:1**). But so were many other people in Jesus' day. However, there was one particular descendant of David who was different from all the others – the promised Messiah. One of the names given to the Messiah was “son of David.”

Read Matthew 9:27-31

Read Matthew 12:22-23

Read Matthew 15:21-22

Read Matthew 20:30-34

Read Matthew 21:9

Root of David

Read Matthew 22:41-46

Jesus poses a riddle to the Pharisees – a paradox* that was found in the Old Testament. At the heart of this paradox lies the dual nature of Christ – that he is both human and divine. For Christ is called both the “branch” or offspring of David and the “root” or ancestor of David. The fact that he is David’s descendant reveals his human nature. The fact that he is David’s Lord reveals his divine nature.

This is the fact that comes out time and again throughout Scripture. Jesus Christ has a dual nature – he is both human and divine.

- Jesus is human (**Galatians 4:4**)
- Jesus is divine (**John 1:1,14; 20:27-28**)

We see this paradox coming through many places in Scripture. Note, for example, who is called “the Alpha and the Omega” in the book of Revelation – in **Revelation 1:8**, it is clearly “the Lord God” who declares himself to be “the Alpha and the Omega.” In **Revelation 21:6** it is “He who is seated on the throne” who calls himself “the Alpha and the Omega.” Yet in **Revelation 22:13**, it is clearly the Lord Jesus himself who declares himself to be “the Alpha and Omega.”

Read Hebrews 1:8-9

Here, in this one passage, we see both the Father and the Son referred to as God. There is no awkwardness about this, just a natural expression of their shared divine nature.

* A paradox is a statement that at face value seems like a contradiction, but which is in fact true.

Understanding the Trinity

God is one (**Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29-30**), yet he is eternally expressed in three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (**Matthew 28:19**). Even in creation, we see the expression of God as triune (see **Genesis 1:26**). How is this possible?

One illustration that may help you to get your mind around the paradox of the three-in-one God is that of an egg. An egg has three parts – the yolk, the white and the shell. Each of these are part of the one egg, yet they are distinct. We are not talking about about three eggs, just one. Yet we can talk about Egg (the Yolk), Egg (the White) and Egg (the Shell).

This is how it is with the triune God. We speak of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They are three, yet they are one.

The Representative Man

As we have seen, Christ is both both God and man in one person. It is because of this dual nature that God's plan of salvation is so effective. It is only as God that Christ can represent God to man. And it is only as man that Christ can represent man to God.

Jesus Represented God

Read Colossians 1:15-17

Jesus existed eternally before he took on human nature (**Micah 5:2**). Before being born into the world, Jesus was called "the Word of God" (**John 1:1-4,14**). As the Word, he communicated the heart of God to mankind. In Jesus, we see what God the Father is like. As Jesus said to his disciples in **John 14:7-11**:

"If you really knew me [Jesus], you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him . Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me."

Read Hebrews 1:3

Read Colossians 2:9

Jesus showed us the nature of God's love, holiness, wisdom and power. He fully represented God to us – in word and in deed.

Read John 1:17-18

Jesus Represented Man

Read Romans 8:3.

In Jesus we not only see the perfect image of God, we also see the perfect image of man, as God intended us to be. He didn't just take on human form; he completely identified with life as we know it. He shared totally in our humanity.

Read Philippians 2:6-8

During his life on earth, Jesus experienced all the troubles of life that we face, and so understands how we feel (**Matthew 8:17**). In this way Jesus became the example for us. In His words, His actions and His character He showed us how to live a life pleasing to God (**1 Peter 4:1-2; 2:21-25**).

Read Hebrews 4:14-15

The dual nature of Jesus – as both human and divine – has another important benefit. Because he is able to fully represent both God and man, he is able to act as a "mediator" or "reconciler" between the two. This is the meaning of Jesus becoming our "great high priest."

Read 1 Timothy 2:5-6

Read 1 John 2:1-2

Jesus Opened Heaven

Through Jesus, the door to heaven has been opened wide to you. He was able to do this because:

He died for you

Read Hebrews 2:9

Wicked men took the Lord Jesus and executed him by nailing him to a wooden cross like a common criminal (read **Mark 15:16-39**). He could have saved himself (note **Matthew 26:52-44; John 18:11; 19:11**), but he did not, for it was through his death on the Cross that God was going to save the world. Jesus died for you!

Read 1 Peter 2:24

He was raised for you

Read Ephesians 2:4-6

When his work on earth was completed, Jesus returned to heaven to be with his Father. But this too was for you, for he opened the way into God's presence, where you can live now and forever!

Read John 14:1-3

Read Hebrews 6:19-20

Read Hebrews 10:19-22

The Name of Salvation

Read Acts 4:12

Read Romans 10:9-11

The Bible tells us that there is no other way to be saved except through the name of Jesus. This is because only the death of Jesus on the Cross deals with the barrier between you and God – sin. Jesus is the only way back to God. This is why, in **John 14:6**, Jesus said:

“...I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

When you accepted Jesus into your life, God linked your life with Jesus. Now, as a Christian, you are forever linked with Jesus – with His righteousness, with His authority, with His character, with His life.

Read Colossians 3:1-4

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