

“WHOM DO MEN SAY THAT I, THE SON OF MAN, AM?”

The most important question you will ever be asked.

Do you have a defensible knowledge from scripture of who Jesus really was; His purpose, and what He accomplished, as opposed to the many spurious definitions one hears from many pulpits?

But who was He, really?

Jesus once asked His disciples, “Whom do men say I, the Son of man, am?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; but still others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets” (Matt. 16:13-14).

And some are still saying--

The comments were diverse and many. Is it any different today? Some say He was the angel Michael (Jehovah’s Witness) or a medium of high order but not divine, (Spiritualism). Others say a human man and a divine idea (Christian Science) or perhaps, one who attained to the pinnacle of intelligence thus becoming a god (Mormon). And On and on it goes.

Do you know who He is? Why he came to earth? What He accomplished? Could you defend your position biblically?

The need for a Messiah

In Geneses 1:31 God pronounced His creation “very good.” But God put Adam and Eve in charge, and even though He cautioned them that disobedience would bring death, they still disobeyed. However, they are not alone, for in Romans 3:23 we read that all have sinned. So man, the epitome of God’s creation, brought death upon himself. Unable to save himself, he now needed a savior, one qualified to pay the death penalty, yet be brought back to life as the **First Fruit** of **many** to follow. Who better than the creator Himself?

Did God foresee this? We are told that God knows the end from the beginning. Do you remember the cryptic prophecy in Genesis 3:16? It tells of a Messiah, or Savior, that will come through the seed of the woman.

The Root of David

Speaking of cryptic messages, look at Revelation 13:8. Who is this Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world, but yet holds the book of life? Could this be the same Lamb we read about in Revelation 5:5? There, John is told about the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, who alone is able to open the Seven Sealed book of life.

However, John, upon looking, did not see a Lion. What John saw was a Lamb that looked as though it had been slain. What a contradiction! Described as a Lion but

appearing as a Lamb, slain yet alive. How strange. What is the significance of this dead yet living, Lion/ Lamb?

God provides

Do you recall the story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 24? Abraham had been instructed by God to sacrifice his son Isaac. This was his son (by his wife Sarah), the first born of the promise. As they were proceeding to the place designated for the sacrifice (which there is reason to believe is the very spot where Jesus was crucified) Isaac noticed that something was missing. Where was the sacrificial lamb? So, he asked his father about it. Abraham's answer was so prophetic. "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb." And Isaac was passed over.

The Passover introduced

Exodus 12 tells an intriguing story, including very specific instructions on how God intended to, and subsequently did, set free an insignificant group of slaves. They were enslaved to a very cruel taskmaster. We're familiar with the story, but let's pay particular attention to the pivotal role of the Lamb, a male of the first year that is without blemish.

At a designated time, they were to kill this Lamb and splash the blood all over the entrance to their homes. They were then to roast the Lamb, eat it whole, and stay inside their homes until morning.

Notice another odd thing in verse six. There must have been thousands of lambs killed that evening. Why were all of these lambs referred to in the singular, as if only one lamb were being sacrificed? Could they have been representing a single sacrifice that would, in effect, cover all of Israel? Could it be that sacrifice was simply a shadow of the Lamb of God that would cover all mankind?

That night the first born of every living creature in the land died. Those that obeyed God's instructions were unharmed, having been passed over, and an entire nation was born. What did killing a lamb have to do with saving the first born of Israel?

An undeniable prophecy

Long before Mary conceived Jesus, Isaiah gave a marvelous description of the promised Messiah. Chapter 53 chronicles the life of Jesus and all he went through in his brief thirty-three years on earth. Notice in particular verse seven. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

The Lamb of God

John the Baptist recognized Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." Peter reminds us that we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without

spot. Finally, Revelation 21 speaks of the Bride of the Lamb and of the city that needs no sun or moon for light, because the Lamb is the light thereof.

Our Passover

Can there be any doubt who the Lamb is and who it symbolizes in the Passover ritual? At the precise time that the priests were slaying the lambs for the Passover, Jesus was dying on the cross. Paul verifies the evidence for us in I Corinthians 5:7, “For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.”

There are many more similarities. Bethlehem, centuries before Christ, was known as the city where the Passover lambs were raised. They sold them to those who came to Jerusalem for the Passover. Isn't it fitting that God's Lamb should be born there?

Rigid requirements

The sacrificial lambs were to be a male and the first born, just as Jesus was. They were to be without spot or blemish. I Peter 1:18-19 tells us that we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish or spot. Jesus was constantly being tested and scrutinized throughout His ministry and found without fault.

The selection

The lamb was to be *selected* on the 10th day of Nisan. Mary anointed Jesus while He ate dinner the evening that

began Nisan 10. As Judas scolded her Jesus said, “Let her alone; against this day of my burying hath she kept this.” (John 12:7). Jesus was actually explaining that Mary’s anointing consecrated Him to God for a sacrificial death. *He had been selected.*

The testing

The lamb was to be held until the 14th day as a time of testing, lest any blemish or spot should appear. Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the 10th was the beginning of an intense period of testing by the religionist. It was then that the Pharisees took counsel as to how they might entrap Him.

Since no error could be found in Him, they decided to use false witnesses. Pilate, however, saw through their plot and spoke these historic words, “I find no fault in him at all” (John 18:34). And so, Jesus was found worthy, without spot or blemish. Just as the lambs slain for the Passover were innocent of man’s sin, so was Jesus innocent of man’s sins, yet was slain in man’s stead.

The appointed time

Not only was Jesus crucified on the very day of the Passover, but also died at about the same hour that the lambs were slain. The Israelites were specifically instructed not to break any bones of their sacrificial lamb. Although it was customary to break the legs of one who was crucified, when the soldiers came to Jesus they saw that He was already dead

and therefore did not break His legs - thus fulfilling yet another prophecy.

The real thing

Hebrews 10:12 gives us an important fact, “This man, after He had offered **one** sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God” (Matt. 22:44; Ps. 110:1). Verse 14 gives us the assurance that the Passover is at last accomplished, **once** and for **all**. “For by **one** offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.” So, the offering has been made and accepted; and as Jesus said, “It is finished.” What was promised four thousand years ago has now come to pass. The Passover has happened in actual fact. The shadow has become reality, but it doesn’t end there.

What’s left for us to do then? Should we eat the flesh of a lamb as our Passover when we have been invited to feast on the Lamb of God? God forbid!

The lamb was to be eaten and the blood sprinkled, as a token, on the altar of the temple. This of course was a type, or shadow, until it was time for the real Lamb of God to come. Now that we have the real thing, should we continue with a substitute, a proxy? Of course not!

But what should we do?

“This do in remembrance of me” (Lk. 22:19):

Jesus, prior to fulfilling the shadow of the Passover, gave us a memorial of that historical event in the ritual of the bread, wine and foot washing. “Take, eat, this is my body,” He said as he broke the bread He had just blessed. And after

blessing the wine He said, “drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:26-29; John 13:3-15).

The Passover lambs of Israel looked forward as a shadow to the blood of the Son of God, while the bread and wine ritual looks back as a memorial to the same event. We no longer need to observe the shadow. We can now observe the feast of Passover by feasting on our Passover, the real Lamb of God. For just as the death angel passed over Israel, the second death has no power over us (Rev. 20:6).

Just as the Children of Israel were freed from the slavery of Egypt, we have been freed from the slavery of sin. Because of the blood of God’s Lamb, we have been brought from death to life. Jesus said, “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (Read John 6:53-58 & 63).

Is this statement too difficult? Is it too much for you to swallow? It was for some of Jesus’ followers in his day. But listen to how He explained it to His disciples in verse 63 & 64. “It is the spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life. But there are some of you who do not believe.”

Back to the question

“Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am?” (Matt. 16:16). Yet, I have told you who I am:

*I am the Ram Abraham sacrificed in place of his First Born son, Isaac (Gen. 24).

*I am the many Lambs that were sacrificed, the night the death angel passed through Egypt (Ex. 12:6).

*I am the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev.13:18).

*I am the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David (Rev.5:5).

*I am the slain Lamb that prevailed to loose the seven seals of the book of life (Rev. 5:5).

*I am the Bread of life. Whosoever eats My flesh, and drinks My blood has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:35).

*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man comes to the Father, but by Me (John 14:6).

Behold, I am the Lamb of God.

Can you count to three?

And one more to help you unclothe the imposters; when asked for proof of who He was, Jesus replied: “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:39-40). So, this was the sign given to the world so that any who really cared could know. A sincere study will prove that Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday and rose late Saturday (knowledge of His annual Holy Days will help) fulfilling precisely the sign He gave to

the world. Does a Friday crucifixion and Easter morning resurrection fulfill His sign? Who is this imposter? Look up the history of Easter Aka Ashtoreth etc. and you decide.

Truly, the Lord has provided Himself a Lamb!

Now for the final exam: There can be no cheating on this test. It will do you no good to look on your neighbor's answer sheet (other's definitions of Christ), for this answer must come from deep within your own heart. By the way, God is the one who grades the papers. However, you will be pleased to know that there is only one question on this test. But the answer may well determine your future. It is the most important question of your life.

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

Write your answer down at the bottom of your notes in great big capital letters. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The Passover reveals the first step in God's plan for the redemption of mankind, but that is only the beginning. What wonderful mysteries await us as we explore the other steps as revealed in His annual appointed times summarized for us in Leviticus 23?

Del Leger, Pastor, Christian Church Of God, Grand Junction, Co. wwwccofgod.org,
©1/14/2003, (970) 249-6857. dlleger@montrose.net

JESUS THE CHRIST

The bearer of our sins (ISAIAH 53)

1 “WHO HAS believed (trusted in, relied upon, and clung to) our message [of that which was revealed to us]? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been disclosed? [John 12:38-41; Rom 10:16.]

2 “For [the Servant of God] grew up before Him like a tender plant, and like a root out of dry ground; He has no form or comeliness [royal, kingly pomp], that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him.

3 “He was despised and rejected and forsaken by men, a Man of sorrows and pains, and acquainted with grief and sickness; and like one from Whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we did not appreciate His worth or have any esteem for Him.

4 “Surely He has borne our grief’s (sicknesses, weaknesses, and distresses) and carried our sorrows and pains [of punishment], yet we [ignorantly] considered Him stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God [as if with leprosy]. [Matt. 8:17.]

5 “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities; the chastisement [needful to obtain] peace and well-being for us was upon Him, and with the stripes [that wounded] Him we are healed and made whole.

6 “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has made to light upon Him the guilt and iniquity of us all. [I Peter 2:24,25.]

7 “He was oppressed, [yet when] He was afflicted, He was submissive and opened not His mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.

8 “By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who among them considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living [stricken to His death] for the transgression of my [Isaiah's] people, to whom the stroke was due?

9 “And they assigned Him a grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in His death, although He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. [Matt 27:57-60; I Peter 2:22,23.]

10 “Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief and made Him sick. When You and He make His life an offering for sin [and He has risen from the dead, in time to come], He shall see His [spiritual] offspring, He shall prolong His days, and the will and pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.

11 “He shall see [the fruit] of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; by His knowledge of Himself [which He possesses and imparts to others] shall My [uncompromisingly] righteous one, My Servant, justify many and make many righteous (upright and in right standing with God), for He shall bear their iniquities and their guilt [with the consequences, says the Lord].

12 “Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great [kings and rulers], and He shall divide the spoil with the mighty, because He poured out His life unto death, and [He let Himself] be regarded as a criminal and be numbered with the transgressors; yet He bore [and took away] the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors (the rebellious)” [Luke 22:37] (Amplified Version).

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