

Who Is This Man?

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Date: 17 March 2024

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[0 : 00] Let's pray. Oh Lord God, you speak in your powerful word and your word does the work of calming the storm, of sending out the demons, of healing people and saving.

Please help us to hear your saving word this morning and to be rightfully fearful of you. For we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I wonder what you'll do when you see Jesus.

How will you respond? For the truth is that one day you will see him. How will you feel when he asks you the question? What are you going to say when he says, why shall I let you into my kingdom?

Why shall I let you into my paradise? Why shall I let you into heaven? What will you say to Jesus? What we say will all depend upon who we think Jesus is before we meet him.

And I wonder what chaos is swirling around about you today. What seems to be so close to overwhelming you, knocking you off your perch. There's a bit going on in my life at the moment, let me tell you.

[1 : 10] And how we cope with that is all dependent upon who we think Jesus is today. Now, who Jesus is, is a timeless question. The nature of Jesus has been debated ever since he entered the world, since the incarnation.

I mean, who is this man? Is he a prophet? Is he a healer? Is he a revolutionary? Is he a blasphemer? Who is this man? And after his death and resurrection, some now, we are in a better position than we were before, but some advocated that he was God, but not man.

That's what some advocated for about Jesus. That's docetism. That's docetism. He only seemed to be a man, but wasn't really. He only seemed to have a body, but he wasn't fully human.

That's one perspective of Jesus, after his death and resurrection. Arius, around the 4th century AD, said that Jesus was a created man, but not God. So, man, but not God.

Man only, not God. And Arius was declared a heretic. Someone who holds to a heteros, to a different belief.

[2 : 20] A belief contrary to that agreed to by the clear teaching of Scripture. The Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Muslims today, do not believe that Jesus was God.

And so, they are heretics. They believe a different teaching. To come to a position on who Jesus is, as revealed in the Scriptures, a council of the church leaders was called together.

The first council of Nicaea was held in about 325 AD. And the nature of God was thrashed out. Who is God? Who is Jesus? Which led then to the Nicene Creed, and further work continued on it for a few years afterwards, until we've got the form, what we've got today about the Nicene Creed.

Where it was agreed that Jesus is God, along with the Holy Spirit, who is also God, and so we have the Trinity. That is, we have one God, three persons, three in one, Trinity.

Now, Athanasius advocated strongly for the Trinity, from the Scriptures, stood dogly for the truth, that they revealed. And he suffered all kinds of hardship, from various authorities, even exiled from his homeland, for a period of time, because he stood firm on, the nature of Jesus, the nature of God.

[3 : 37] And his epitaph is famous, you know, what's put on your gravestone? Athanasius, against the world. He was not going to move, when pushed, and prodded, to change, what the Scriptures teach.

And so we have the Athanasius Creed today, named after him, but not written by him, which affirms the Christian biblical faith. Now, we believe that Jesus, is 100% God, and 100% man.

He is the God-man, fully God, fully man. Two natures, one person. One person, without mixture, without confusion, without separation, or division, wherein each nature, retains its own attributes.

And becoming man on earth, Jesus voluntarily, relinquished his divine aspects, of his divine glory, and dignity, but not his power, or attributes, of his authority.

He's no less God, God in the flesh. John chapter 17, verse 5 says, he relinquished his glory, but in father, glorify your son, as he had in the beginning.

[4 : 51] In becoming man, he was not fallen man, though born of Mary, he was not born a sinful human, being. And in our passage today, we see both the humanity, of Jesus, and the divinity, of Jesus.

The disciples, however, are struggling, to see it. Now, Jesus is beside the sea again, and there's a mega storm, as he saves the sailors. He spent a long time in Galilee, a long time around Capernaum, and at the end of the day, when he'd been teaching the crowd in the parables, he set off across the sea.

There's a couple of boats there with him. And this event is vivid in Mark's memory. Jesus got up and went, just as he was, you know, whatever he had with him, he went, that was it.

There's a great storm, a mega storm, and something so ferocious, that the disciples are afraid, for their very lives. As regular fishermen, four of them, would have been well aware, that their lives were, in peril, at risk.

And Jesus, I don't know how he did it, but he's sound asleep, on the cushion, in the boat. He's fully human. He knew what it was like to be tired. He did sleep, like a normal person.

[6 : 03] Seems like he's exhausted, to be able to sleep, in this situation. There's no bilge pump, and the boat's filling up, and that's never good, and it's dark, and even more terrifying.

So they woke Jesus up, and for the first time in Mark, they called him teacher. He's their teacher, instructor, and what a lesson, they're about to learn, to get.

They see that they are lost, perishing, about to drown. Does Jesus care? Does Jesus know, that he's in the same boat, as they are, with them, and he's going to suffer, the same fate as them, drowning at sea?

How can you sleep, at a time like this, Jesus? Sounds similar, to the story of Jonah, doesn't it? But Jesus is not running away, from God at the moment. And so, Jesus wakes up, fully man, wakes up, from his sleep, got tired, and needed to sleep, like the rest of us, and he rebukes the wind.

That is, he speaks seriously, to the wind. The idea is, to bring an end, to what the wind is doing. He tells the wind, in no uncertain terms, to stop blowing, and the wind ceases.

[7 : 16] He said to the sea, peace, be still. Literally, peace, be quiet, is what he's saying.

Literally, be still, to put you to silence, be muzzled, no longer blow, no longer make that noise. A great wind, in the storms, is really loud.

That's what all the people say, when they go through cyclones. The wind of a storm, causes waves on the sea, and at his word, there's a mega calm. No more wind, no more waves, from the boat, silence, calm, peace.

And Jesus asked the first, of a series of questions, that he's going to ask, in this section, it'll finish in chapter 5. Interesting question. Why, are you afraid?

not, why, were you afraid? But, why, are you so afraid? They'd feared for their life, while the storm raged, but now they are still afraid, even now that the storm has ceased, and they're out of danger, but they're still afraid.

[8 : 32] Have you still no faith? That is, don't they trust Jesus? Don't they rely on him? Trust Jesus with their lives? Trust Jesus, has the power, to look after them, and the answer is, well, if they're afraid, before, by the prospect of drowning, in the midst of the lake, they are now terrified, by the person, who's in the boat, with them.

They have a mega fear, because they are wondering, who is this man, in the boat, with them? Just as the Pharisees, asked the question, who can forgive sins?

Here, the disciples ask, who is this, that even the wind, and the waves, obey him? And the answer, they are supposed to come up with, is God. Let me read to you, from Psalm 65, 65 verse 5, by awesome deeds, you answer with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the earth, ends of the earth, and the farthest seas, the one who by his strength, established the mountains, being girded with might, who stills the roaring, of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples, so that those who dwell, at the ends of the earth, are in awe of your signs, you make the going out, of the morning, and the evenings, to shout for joy.

Did you hear it? God is the one, who calms the roaring, of the waves. Or consider Psalm 89, verse 8 and 9, O Lord God of hosts, who is mighty, as you are O Lord, with your faithfulness, all around you, you rule the raging, of the sea, when its waves rise, you still them.

Or Psalm 106, verse 9, He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry, and He led them through the deep, as though a desert.

[10:18] The answer is, God is in the boat, with the disciples. And that's the reason, they're greatly afraid.

Imagine being that close, to the one who made the universe, being in your boat, with you. I know what it's like, to have a massive fish, right, with ferocious teeth, thrashing around, in a boat, with you.

It was alright, while it's in the water, but once it gets into the boat, and starts chomping, around the place, you don't want your hand, anywhere near it, you don't want your feet, anywhere near it, for fear of losing your hand, and your feet. You be careful, you're afraid.

But to have God, in the boat with you. The one who rescued Israel, out of Egypt, as we've heard. The one who passed, over Egypt, killing the firstborn, of all those, who did not trust, in the lamb, sacrificed in their place.

The one who rebuked the sea, and they went across, on dry land. The one who saved, his people, and provided for his people, for 40 years, in the wilderness, in your little boat. Who is this, that even the wind, and the waves, obey him?

[11:35] Well the next episode, he gets out of the boat, comes the other side. I'm sure that, those in the boat, jumped out, and were glad, to be on solid ground, and get a little bit of distance. They're now in the country, of the Gerasenes, and if it's where, people think it is, they got off the boat, within a short walk, of caves, which have been used, for tombs.

And they meet, a demon possessed man. His humanity, is distorted, by a demon, that's in him. He has an unclean spirit, he lives in an unclean, place, where in Gentile territory, evident that it's a place, where pigs, are farmed.

Pigs unclean, for Jews. And notice how appalling, the situation is, for this man, did you notice it? People have tried, to tie him up, in chains, because of his, freakish behaviour, but he can't be bound anymore, he has super strength, able to break the chains, and destroy the shackles.

And he shrieks, and screams, always crying out, you would hear him, howling in the tombs, and howling upon the mountains. He's cutting himself, with stones, and blood's flowing, from his wounds.

It's a pitiful sight, to behold. Humanity, draining away from him. Let me say, demon possession, distorts, and destroys people, made in the image of God.

[13:02] You don't want, getting in league, with Satan. Satan is a cruel, master, ruining life, and he afflicts, both body, and mind.

It's not a case of epilepsy, or madness, it's demon possession, for this fellow. It's not some virus, of some kind, because viruses, aren't contagious to pigs, to make them do, what they did.

To worship Satan, to give him a foothold, in your life, to believe his lies, leads to misery, and much, much misery. And so, this demon possessed man, cries out, with a mega voice, a really loud voice, asking the question, what do you have to do, with me, there verse 7, son of the most high God.

The demons, recognise, who Jesus is. Whereas the disciples, in the boat, are wondering. The demons recognise, that there is a most high God, and their master, Satan, is not the most high God.

The demons believe, we're told in James, chapter 2, verse 19, and tremble. They're afraid of Jesus, rightly so. The demons recognise, the authority, and the power of Jesus, to do as he wills.

[14:26] And so we see here, that the demons are destroyed. The demon, in the man, recognises, that Jesus is opposed to him, and that Jesus, comes to torment him, and to defeat him, and Jesus has the power, to do it.

And the demon, doesn't want to be exposed, removed from the man, and this deposing, of the demon, won't be just by, won't be by an arm wrestle, not going to be some, all night prayer, vigil either.

Won't be by, jumping up and down on him, and it won't be by, forcing water down his throat. Right? It will be by, the calm, word, of Jesus.

Notice what the demon says, I implore you, I adieu you, command you, by God, not to torment me. Calling on the power, of the most high God, that Jesus would not, torment him.

It's the height of all, absurdity isn't it? That the unclean spirit, commands Jesus, in the name of the most high God, not to torment him.

[15 : 35] Rather than, the unclean spirit, submit, to the most high God, and recognise, the demons would seek, to divide the kingdom of God, by having the most high God, God the Father, have Jesus, God the Son, split in their purposes.

There are many demons. Jesus calls on the demon's name, and we see his name is Legion. Now Legion, in a Roman army, was about 6,000 soldiers. Not just one, but many demons run this man. Now I wonder why Jesus asked of his name. Maybe because, in knowing the name, reveals the person. There's no hiding from Jesus now. And it's clear, which man we're talking about.

Now Satan has many agents, let me tell you. Those who would do his bidding. And it's the intent of Satan, to bring about harm, to destroy, to kill.

And the demons are out to destroy their host. And so the demon begs Jesus, to be sent to the herd of pigs. Unclean spirits into unclean animals.

[16 : 50] In the presence of Jesus, the unclean spirits are driven into the unclean animals, and run down to sea and are drowned. And destroying the hosts, the pigs destroy themselves. Those looking after the pigs, the herdsmen, well, they tell the owners in the city, and all those around about them, what's happened.

And the owners in the city, come out to see, it for themselves. And what do they see? They see the ex-demoniac, now a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. They see the demon possessed man, free of demons, and restored to society.

They see him sitting there, restored in his humanity, in his right mind. Clothed, no longer running around, screaming in the tombs, naked.

Now they see a disciple of Jesus. They see that Jesus has plundered the strong man's house, simply by his word. And the town folk are afraid.

And those around about the place are afraid, just like the disciples, having seen the radical transformation, this man, notice what they want. Jesus has saved the man, restored his humanity, but brought about financial ruin on the district.

[18 : 04] And these people prefer the property more than the person. And just as the demons begged Jesus to send them into the pigs, the people begged Jesus to leave them. We don't want you around here.

Leave the region. They don't want Jesus anywhere near them, for they fear for their livelihoods. But the restored man does want to stick with Jesus.

And Jesus tells him that instead of going with him, he's to stay and tell his friends what's happened, tell them about the Lord's mercy upon him, and all that's happened. And he does.

He goes around the Decapolis, and so as he does so, people marvel at what's happened, and they hear of the mercy of God. This man is unleashed in the demons, and interestingly, he is not silenced, but is bold to speak.

Jesus told the Jews and the spirits to be silent, but he tells the Gentile ex-demoniac, now to speak. Tell the saving he's received from the demons, and the people marvel.

[19 : 08] Jesus is even more powerful than the demons. Well, let's just try and bring it home now, seeing the Saviour.

I think we can think about belief, restoration and peace. First of all, belief. Who is this man? As we see the Saviour, we see him with the eyes of faith, living this side of the cross.

We see a number of things. Jesus is bringing in the Kingdom of God, and he's the one who has the authority over the creation, being the creator. He is the one who has authority over Satan and his agents, being the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and they recognise him as God Most High, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

At the same time, there's belief that Jesus is fully human, and he loves us and cares for us. He's our Saviour. He calls us his friends, because he tells us what's going on. And he's the one who lays on his life for his precious sheep.

But there's belief, and there's belief, isn't there? There is belief, knowing that Jesus is the Son of God. The demons believe it.

[20 : 17] They know with his wonderful authority, they can't deny it, but they don't change their attitude towards Jesus. In their rebellion, they try and have mastery over Jesus still.

And in their rebellion, they would rather stay unclean than repent. Belief in Jesus that counts, is recognising that Jesus is Lord of all, and then living in obedience before him, as this radically changed man does.

Jesus is the Saviour because he's fully God. And when we stand, when I stand, when you stand in the presence of God, when you see the power of God like this, it should rightly cause us to fear him. We could do well to be like Job, couldn't we? And hold our hands to our mouths and say nothing to God, but to sit in silence in his presence, sit in silence when he speaks, and simply hear his word and tremble at it.

We also see restoration. Jesus brings order out of the chaos as he calms the sea. Jesus restores humanity, what it should be like. We get a glimpse of this with the demon-possessed man, ruined by evil and wrecked, but restored in his right mind.

[21 : 45] At one level, he is someone who has moved from death to life. That's what's happened for this man. Let me tell you, those caught up in sin are in a similar position to this man's former situation.

Those who do not live with Jesus Lord are in a similar position to this man. They might not look like it, but are caught up in all kinds of evil and destructive ways of life.

They're actually not in the right mind when it comes to thinking about Jesus. But Jesus comes to restore people and will transform us further and further when we're raised on that last day into his likeness perfectly, the perfect human.

And finally, peace. Because he is the Son of God Most High, God the Son, his power is something that brings comfort and peace even now. It can bring peace to Peter Nixon as he stands at the door to life.

Jesus is in total control of the very elements of creation. He rules over the weather. He rules over the storm.

[23 : 04] He rules over the waves of the sea. He's not threatened by Satan and his fellow fiends. Jesus is Lord of all. He rules over everything that happens in the world and he rules over everything that happens in our lives.

Which is why we can have peace with God in the storms of life around about us. not necessarily that he will silence them immediately but because of the right perspective on who he actually is. Philippians chapter 4 verse 4 let me read out to you. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I'll say rejoice that your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Lord is at hand. Not that we're in the boat and that he is there with us but that his return and that his kingdom is near is closer to coming one day closer than today than it was yesterday. and the peace of God that peace of knowing that Jesus is Lord that's the peace that guards our hearts and our minds knowing that he is in total control that he has the power to bring about all things accordance to his will and that we are right where he'd have us to be that he has calmed the raging storms in the past and that the saving power of Jesus will bring us safely into his kingdom on the last day for all eternity no matter what.

[24 : 47] This knowledge this peace is beyond understanding. It's a mega peace a peace the world needs but a peace the world can't have it the way it's going about it now.

It is truth it is that truth that brings peace with God which will guard our hearts and our minds and our whole lives which will take away the fear of whatever we're going through at the moment and bring us home safely restored completely into the kingdom of God.

Let's pray. Our Father in Heaven as we hear your word and we see who Jesus is with the eyes of faith help us to recognise that he truly is God and that in knowing him you might give us this peace which passes all understanding and we pray that as we speak about Jesus that people would marvel about him and know the peace that we've received in Christ Jesus as well for we pray it in Jesus name and for your glory Amen