



“I am one that bears witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me,” John 8:18.

Jesus Speaks About Himself

Lesson Aim: To magnify our reverence for Jesus.

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INTRODUCTION

When you meet a stranger it is natural to ask questions about him. What is his name? Where is he from? What is his occupation? Who are his relatives? What is he doing in this community? Is he interested in spiritual things? From the answers to these questions you can know what sort of man he is.

It is not surprising, therefore, that we should want to ask questions about the Lord Jesus Christ. He came into the world in a new and different way, Luke 1-2. He was an unusual person in word and deed. He is said to be the Saviour of those who believe, I Timothy 4:10. What sort of person was he?

The answer to each question concerning Jesus is to be found in the Holy Bible. With each answer it becomes increasingly evident that God has spoke to us by a Son in the person of Jesus, Hebrews 1:1-3.

Today's study aims “to magnify reverence for Jesus.” The comments that follow will look into the Gospel records of the person and work for Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit (who is in the world to make real the things of Jesus, John 16:12-15) will teach as we listen when “Jesus Speaks About Himself.”

EXPOSITION

1. DECLARATION OF HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

1. Jesus distinctly said that God was His Father, John 17:21. The people understood the meaning of His words on this subject. His opponents tried to kill Him because He said God was His father, thus making Himself equal with God, John 5:18.

Jesus declared that He came from the Father, John 8:42. He was sent into the world to perform a ministry designated by the Father, John 17:18. Before coming, He shared the glory of God with the Father, John 17:5. Not only did He come from the Father, but He came with the knowledge that He would return to the Father when His earthly ministry was completed, John 13:3. He deserves to be adored.

2. Jesus distinctly claimed equality with God. This was the understanding of His words by those who heard Him, John 5:17-18. Because of this equality, **“That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father,”** John 5:23. Though they were distinct as persons (being the first and second persons of the divine Trinity), they were one in essence; hence, Jesus could truthfully say, **“I and my Father are one,”** again causing the Jews to try to kill Him, John 10:30-31.

The Lord Jesus also claimed to be filled with, and anointed by, the Holy Spirit of God. Matthew 3:16 records how the Holy Spirit came upon Him when He had been baptized by John. Matthew 4:1 tells how He was “led of the Spirit” into the wilderness where the temptations by Satan took place.

When He returned to Nazareth, His hometown, He sought to tell the people what had transpired and what He was destined to do. So, on the Sabbath day He stood up in their Synagogue to read the Scripture. He read these words from the book of Isaiah, **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he 'hath anointed me to preach. . .”** and then He began to preach and said, **“... This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears,”** Luke 4:16-21.

It is evident, therefore, that Jesus declared His relationship to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit to be one of unity and intimacy. The truth of His declaration is evident in the manner of His life and the miracle of His atonement. As deity, He receives our worship.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE TITLES HE WORE

1. Jesus called Himself a preacher. He spoke of visiting the towns in

Palestine, **“That I may preach there also,”** Mark 1: 38. The term “preach” which He used is built upon the Greek word “kerussein.” It means “a herald's proclamation of the message from a king.” It is evident, bringing a proclamation from God to men. We must hear Him. He is God's messenger! Such a proclamation was of divine authorization. It was the announcement of a kingdom. It was a “gospel” since the coming of the kingdom was “good news” to men. It included a demand for repentance. It is summarized in Mark 1:15, **“... The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”**

2. Jesus called Himself a prophet. The term “prophet” is formed from a combination of two Greek words: “pro” meaning “before” and “phami” meaning “face.” A prophet, therefore, is one who speaks “before the face.” He is one who receives God's message and delivers it to men. Jesus saw Himself as a prophet in this sense.

When rejected in His home town, He said, **“... A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house,”** Matthew 13:57. As the time of His crucifixion neared, He set His face to go to Jerusalem giving this explanation to His disciples, **“... It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem,”** Luke 13:33. It is evident that Jesus identified Himself as a man who had stood before God, received His message, and proclaimed it before men. He was, indeed, a prophet. Hear Him!

3. Jesus called Himself a teacher. Of course, others called Him that often. Six times in the gospels He is called “Rabbi” (a title given the greatest and wisest teachers). Luke called him an “epistates.” This is the Greek title given the headmaster who was in charge of training cadets for military service. More than thirty times the term “didaskalos” (the common Greek word for “teacher”) was used of Him.

Not only did others recognize Him as a teacher, toward the end of His ministry Jesus began to use the term regarding Himself. In selecting a room for the Passover and the institution of the Lord's Supper, He identified Himself as “The Master” (or, “The Teacher”), Matthew 26:18. The duty of a teacher is to present truth in such a way as to cause others to learn. In this sense, Jesus was a teacher par excellence. Do you learn of Him?

III. DEFINITION OF THE MINISTRY HE PERFORMED

The ministry of Jesus is recorded in the Gospels and interpreted in the Epistles. We could survey His deeds to determine His ministry. We could listen to His words to define His ministry! But a more interesting way is to

observe the figures of speech He used to describe His ministry. Some of these figures are listed below. See how many others you can list.

1. Jesus came to be the Divine Physician of the sick souls of men. He viewed men in sin as being spiritually sick unto death. He alone was able to minister healing. This is why He associated with publicans and sinners, to heal them, Matthew 9:9-13. Have you received His healing grace?

2. Jesus came to be the Divine Servant of men. When others sought places of great authority or honor in His Kingdom, Jesus pointed out that He did not come for others to minister to Him but that He might be a servant to them, Matthew 20:20-28. Are you willing to be His servant?

3. Jesus came to be the Seeker of the lost. Like the shepherd seeks for a lost sheep; like the woman seeks for a lost coin; like the father seeks for a lost son, so does Jesus seek sinners, Luke 15. In fact, His whole ministry may be summarized, **“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,”** Luke 19:10. Have you responded to His call?

4. Jesus came to be the Fulfiller of all that was best in the past. His purpose was not to destroy God's former revelation, but to bring out its spiritual content and thus to bring it into its full meaning and application, Matthew 5:17.

5. Jesus came to be the Divine Liberator of mankind. Therefore He gave His life a ransom (payment to purchase out of slavery into freedom) for many, Mark 10:45.

6. Jesus came to be the Saviour of men. He testified, “For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. . .” Luke 9:56. Are you saved by faith in Him?

Here is what Jesus said about Himself. He is the Divine Physician who heals, the Divine Servant who ministers, the Divine Seeker who finds, the Divine Fulfiller who gives meaning, the Divine Liberator who redeems, and the Divine Saviour who makes safe all those who come to God by Him. What a Christ is He!

IV. DEMAND IN THE CLAIMS HE MADE

1. Jesus called for implicit obedience to His words. Because, the words He spoke were “spirit and life,” He could demand full obedience to them, John 6: 63. Readiness to stand the testing of God depended upon one's obedience to His words. He who heard and obeyed was like a wise man who built his house upon a rock; he who heard and obeyed not was like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand, Matthew 7:24-27. Such a demand for full obedience was made that people who heard Jesus “were astonished

at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority,” Matthew 7:28-29. Do you obey His words?

2. Jesus called for complete loyalty to His person. No disciple must love parents more than Jesus, else he is not worthy to be a disciple. No disciple must love children more than Jesus, else he is not worthy either. No disciple must love self more than Jesus, else he is not worthy of being His disciple. (See Matthew 10:37-39!) How loyal are you?

“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple,” Luke 14:26-27.

3. Jesus called Himself the agent of judgment. His mission was not to send peace on the earth, but a sword, Matthew 10:34. Because of Him households would be divided and fire would be kindled in the earth. Luke 12:49-53. The Father no longer judged nor executed judgment, for He had committed all judgment unto the Son for the purpose that men should honour the Son as they honour the Father, John 5:22-23. Then very words which He spoke would be the standard by which men would be judged in the last day, John 12:48. His judgment is always righteous judgment, John 5:30; 8: 16,

4. Jesus called Himself the touchstone of God. Men's response to Him would determine their eternal destiny. To confess or to deny Him would determine acceptance or refusal before the Father, Luke 12:8-9. This is the reason why He is declared to be the only Saviour. Treatment accorded Jesus is treatment accorded God. How careful each person should be that he knows the Lord Jesus Christ in truth. The fortunes of time and eternity are in the balance. Only Jesus can make you safe.

V. DISTINCTION IN THE NAME HE BORE

“Son of Man” was Jesus' own personal and most deliberately chosen title for Himself. It occurs 82 times in the New Testament and all but one (Acts 7:56) are in the Gospels. Each time the term occurs in the Gospels it is on the lips of Jesus, except for one time when the crowd quoted His words, John 12:34. No one ever addressed Jesus by this title. It is uniquely the title He chose for Himself. The term “Son of Man” occurs in the book of Daniel where it means a frail human. It is used also in the apocryphal book of Enoch where the “Son of Man” is pictured as a divine, pre-existent, superhuman figure who would come from God to overthrow His enemies.

Jesus purposefully took this term to underscore the reality of His

human nature. He was “Son of Man” and not “Son of Abraham” because He had a common affinity with all humanity, not just with the Jews. This term also contrasted His then-present humiliation with His future glory, Psalm 8:4-6.

Jesus used the term “Son of Man” as a substitute for the first person pronoun “I” (Luke 9:58), in making great claims or declarations (Luke 19:10), in connection with the resurrection (Matthew 17:9), in connection with future glory (Matthew 26:64), and in relation to His second coming and future judgment (Matthew 16:28; 24:44; 13:41).

Thus in the minds of that generation, Jesus identified Himself as a man who was at the same time the Messiah promised of God. By use of the term “Son of Man,” Jesus made it evident that as the Suffering Servant He must accept the cross, and as the Messianic King He must enter into His glory. And this He did. Praise God!

CONCLUSION

It is not surprising that Jesus spoke so much of Himself. It is evident that He declared equality with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. He called Himself a preacher, teacher and prophet. He defined His ministry as healing, seeking, serving, fulfilling, liberating, and saving guilty sinners. He demanded obedience to His words, loyalty to His person, and declared that as men received or rejected Him so did they receive or reject God.

This is what Jesus said of Himself. Now, what do you say of Him? Can you say with full honesty, “He is my Saviour”? Can you say, “He is my Lord”? Can you say, “He alone is the sovereign of my heart and life”? God grant that you can. For only in such a relationship to Jesus is the abundance of life to be found here and in eternity.

QUESTIONS

1. What is Jesus' relationship to the Father?
2. What was Jesus' relationship to the Holy Spirit?
3. In what sense was Jesus a preacher?
4. In what sense was He a prophet?
5. How did He define His ministry?
6. Why did He demand obedience to His words?
7. In what sense is He the touchstone of God?
8. What does “Son of Man” mean?
9. Why did Jesus choose this term for Himself?

10. How has this study increased your reverence for Jesus?