

Core Belief: About Jesus

August 23 – *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.”* (Hebrews 4:15) In Jesus we have a connection, a place of reference in our relationship with God. God became one of us, not because God needed to save us in this way but because we needed God to become one of us so that we could be saved. In Jesus all the fullness of God dwelt in bodily form. Through Jesus we are reconciled to God and we have an example for life. The “high priest” was the one who stood in the gap between humans and God in the Old Testament times. Jesus has taken on this role. He is the one who now stands in the gap for us and he is the one who became our sacrifice for atonement. Through faith in Jesus we are saved, our sins are forgiven, our life is eternal. We have no right to say that God does not know what we are going through for God became one of us to take away that argument. Jesus knew what it meant to be tempted, to be hungry, and to be betrayed, to be thirsty and hungry and tired. All of this and yet Jesus never sinned. He is our example, the one that we follow in order to be in a right relationship with God.

August 24 – *“He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth.”* (1 Peter 2:22) This is a reference to Isaiah 53:9 which was a prophecy about the coming Messiah. It was written some 500 years before Jesus was born. It is a perfect representation of who Jesus was, a man who committed no sin, even though he was tempted in every way that you and I are tempted and a man who had no “deceit” in his mouth. Deceit is, “The act or practice of deceiving; concealment or distortion of the truth for the purpose of misleading; duplicity, fraud or cheating.” What you saw is what you got with Jesus. He was not a politician or a religious leader. He was the truth in bodily form. He was the Word of God in bodily form. He was God in bodily form. God cannot deceive or sin because it goes against the very nature of God, the very essence of who God is. Thus Jesus was not a sinner and “no deceit was found in his mouth.” Those are pretty big shoes to fill but the good news is that our calling is not to fill the shoes but to walk in the footsteps. Jesus is our example and we are to follow him and in that following we will have a right relationship with God. Being a disciple of Jesus is not about being perfect, it is about following the one who is.

August 25 – *“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”* (1 Peter 2:24) When sin entered the world through Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden the penalty was death. This sin became a debt for all of humanity and that debt needed to be paid by death. Jesus died for us on the cross (“the tree”) in order to pay that debt once and for all. Through his death we have the ability to die to our sins. “Might” represents that we have the choice. We can make the choice to accept Jesus and die to our sins or reject Jesus and die in our sins. Either way, death must be the price paid for sin. Jesus’ death is what is called “substitutionary death” because he substituted himself for us. This freedom from sin and a life of righteousness is the healing that everyone has been given through Jesus. The question for each one of us is if we will accept this gift of healing.

August 26 – *“For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)* No conversation about Jesus would be complete without this famous verse. Yet, what are we to do with this “Son” reference? Is Jesus literally the offspring of some sexual relations between God and a woman? If Jesus is God in bodily form then how can Jesus be God’s “Son”? We must take a step back in time and understand that to be the son of...meant so much more than simple genetics. It is true that in Jesus’ day people were identified by their fathers, such as “James son of Zebedee” (Matthew 4:21) because last names or family names did not exist as we know them now. Jesus is God’s Son because the Holy Spirit came down upon Mary and she gave birth to Jesus as a baby. Yet, the term “Son” also had a deeper understanding and that is the son is the very nature of the father. Saying James son of Zebedee not only linked him to a family but it also linked him to his father. James was the very nature of Zebedee. The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree! Saying that Jesus was the Son of God meant that Jesus was the very nature of God or God in bodily form because this apple truly didn’t fall far from the tree!

August 27 – *“It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.” (1 Corinthians 1:30)* Understanding who Jesus is requires “wisdom” which is “knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action.” Jesus has “become for us wisdom from God” which means that he is the embodiment of what is true and right and his actions demonstrate this knowledge. It is one thing to know something is right and true and quite another to apply this knowledge to our daily lives. In Jesus we have both knowledge and application that is why he is our example, the one we are called to follow. What is the wisdom that Jesus has become for us? “Our righteousness, holiness and redemption”. We cannot be righteous, holy or redeemed on our own so Jesus became all of this for us; so that through following him we can be righteous, holy and redeemed. The wisdom that we need to possess on our own is the wisdom to see in Jesus all of this wisdom from God and then apply it to our lives. We cannot be righteous, holy and redeemed on our own but we can be wise enough to follow the one who is all of this for us.

August 28 – *“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” (Matthew 24:44)* These are the words of Jesus as he teaches about the end times. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary; he lived, ministered and was crucified on the cross and on the third day he was resurrected from the dead. Yet, there is more to the story and more to our understanding of our core belief about Jesus. There is going to come a day when Jesus will return. He is coming again and we do not know when, regardless of how many people are out there predicting, nobody knows. This is important because when Jesus returns he will not be a poor man from Nazareth, walking the countryside of Israel teaching and healing and praying. He will come with might and with power. In that time those who are dead to their sins because of their faith in Jesus have nothing to fear. Those who are dead in their sins and have rejected Jesus have everything to fear. We haven’t seen the last of Jesus for he will return and the world as we know it will be transformed forever.