

Date: 1 Jan 2023

Scripture Passage: Luke 1:26-38

Title: Who Is Jesus Christ?

Introduction

- Today is New Year. Last week was Christmas. As we embark on this new year, we want to understand Who is Jesus Christ, and what Christmas means.
- Christmas is just a festival to many people in the world. It is celebrated with fun and joy. But to Christians, Christmas is more than a festival. We celebrate Christmas by worshipping God for the coming of Jesus Christ to the world.
- Who then is Jesus Christ? From our passage, four things can be said about Him.

I. He is the divine Son of God.

- The Bible teaches that there is one true God who created everything out of nothing (John 1:1-3). He continues to control all things and events that happen. At the same time, He holds man responsible for his actions.
- The Bible also reveals to us that the one God exists in three persons. The three persons are mentioned in this passage. They are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (v35). Each person is God, yet there are not three Gods but one. This is a deep mystery concerning our Creator, which creatures like us cannot fully understand. We accept this revelation with awe and gratitude, for left to ourselves, we would not have known this truth. Jesus Christ is God the Son, who has existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit from eternity.

II. He became truly Man, but without sin.

- God promised to send a Savior when man first sinned against God. Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, ate from the tree that God forbade. Man's nature became sinful. We are all descended from Adam and Eve. We are all born with a sinful nature. There is not one person in this world who has not sinned.
- When the time arrived, the Son of God came to this world by being born of a virgin (v27). Mary was not yet married. She had not known any man (v34). The Holy Spirit miraculously caused her to conceive, so that the baby in her was without sin (v35). In that way, the Son of God took upon Himself perfect human nature, without ceasing to be God.

III. As God and Man in one person, He is the Savior of sinners.

- Jesus Christ grew up and taught the people that He was the promised Savior. The name "Jesus" means "Savior". The name "Christ" means "the One God has sent". Most of the Jews at that time rejected Him despite the many miracles He performed to support His claim. The unbelieving Jews instigated the Roman authorities to crucify Him on the cross.
- The people at that time did not realize that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross was planned by God. Jesus Christ was actually dying on behalf of His people. He was bearing the punishment from God for the sins of His people. His blood shed on the cross was for the cleansing of the hearts of His people. Note that it is for His people. Who are His people? John 3:16 says that that "For God so loved the world, that whosoever believe in Him". Are you one of those who believe? It is in that way that God forgives their sin and accepts them as His children.

IV. He came to rule over those who belong to Him.

- Jesus Christ rose from death on the third day, and ascended to heaven to wait for His people. He will one day return to judge the world. The virgin Mary who gave birth to Jesus Christ was a descendant of King David. Joseph, who married Mary subsequently, was also a descendant of King David (v27). Jesus Christ, therefore, was a descendant of David (v32) from both Mary as well as Joseph, who became His step-father.
- Just as King David ruled over the nation of Israel, Jesus Christ will rule over His chosen people. David's earthly kingdom was symbolic of Jesus Christ's spiritual kingdom. David ruled over his people on earth for a limited time. Jesus Christ will rule over His people forever (v33). Whoever turns from sin to God, and believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior, will have everlasting life.

Call to repent and believe

- Christ did not come to save you when you are at your high point. Instead he comes when you are at your lowest. It is called grace! Confess your sins! Yes, in the mess that you are in. Seek the LORD while He may be

found, Call upon Him while He is near (Isaiah 55:6). It is not because of any good found in you but purely His grace and mercy.

You, O Christ, are all I want,
More than all in You I find,
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is Your name,
I am all unrighteousness,
Vile and full of sin I am,
You are full of truth and grace.

- The Bible is all about Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. We may be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ. As we embark on this new year, let us come to Jesus Christ! Trust Him to save you! He will give you eternal life.

Two divine principles introduced (3:1-8).

- “Principle of relative accountability” (1-3 cf. Luke 12:48). Israel was a privileged nation, chosen by God, called out of Egypt, “known” (loved) (v2). They were in a covenant with God where faithfulness was required. But Israel broke their covenant (3). To whom much is given, much will be expected. When God gives you more privileges, God expects more from you. That is why there are degrees of sin, and there are degrees of judgement. When one sins of ignorance, one will still be judged. But one who sins willfully, one will be judged and condemned even more so. Israel was in sin despite being God’s covenant people. We who are Christians ought to examine our own hearts. Don’t justify yourselves. Don’t blame others or circumstances. It is far safer in our walk with God that we examine our hearts often. When God is having dealings with you, take heed and examine your own heart.
- “Principle of cause and effect” (4-8). Lion roars because prey is caught (4). Bird falls because caught in snare (5). City under siege because the Lord has done it (6). There are times when poetry is written in ways to make it rhyme. Here we see v4-5 providing the prelude to the punchline in v6. The city of Samaria will be destroyed because of Israel’s sin, and the Lord has done it. Are you hearing Israel? What about us today? Are we hearing God’s call through the calamities that we are going through? Take heed, and examine your hearts. There may be things to put right in your life. Judgement from God is caused by sin in Israel. Similarly, Amos has to speak because God is moving him to do so (7). God is like a lion who has roared. Amos has to respond, and act as His mouthpiece (8). Israel must take heed of what God is saying! Heed these words!

The first charge: Israel’s social sins (3:9-3:15).

- Israel has sinned so blatantly, even the pagan nations will notice the chaos & oppression (9-11). There is no justice, there is violence & corruption even in the palaces (10). The enemies will certainly attack, persistently to sap your strength, & plunder you (11). In less than 30 years, the Assyrians will come and Israel fell in 722 BC.
- Only a small remnant will be left after the Assyrian invasion (12-15). The place of worship in Bethel will not be able to save Israel (13-14). They had represented Jehovah in an image of a calf. They put on a show of worship. All symbols of prosperity will be destroyed, winter house, summer house, great houses. It is so certain because the LORD has said it (15d). True godliness seen in behavior & way of life. What you are internally will manifest itself externally.

The second charge: Israel’s religious sins (4:1-13).

- The women folk of the nation have sinned (4:1-3). Often it is that the women form the strength of the church. Women play a very important role in the life of the church, in the household, in the nation. Women are capable of theological understanding. Behind every successful man is a woman. But women may also be the downfall of men, the household, the nation, the church. Here in this passage they are called “cows of Bashan”, oppressing others, instigating husbands (1b). The Assyrians will take them away as prisoners (2), straight to Harmon, in Assyria. (3). Their descendants will suffer oppression, led by fishhooks. Women, are you a helper for good or evil? Ladies in the church, are you a helper for good or evil?
- Israel had much external show of religion (4-5). They show themselves as religious, say the right words, and do the right thing. Are we Christian today the same? We are supposed to be saved, just like the Israelites were supposed to be the special chosen people of God. But are we outwardly appearing as Christians? You will be denied entry into heaven if you are not genuinely converted. God has said come to Him you who are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Repent and trust in Christ. God chastised the Israelites by famine, but warning was not heeded (6). It was clear that God was giving warning by selective rain (7-8), crops failed from disease and locust attacks (9), deaths by plague and war (10). Israel could have gone extinct, like what happened to Sodom & Gomorrah (11). Despite all these warnings, Israel did not repent. Amos prophesied, “Yet you have not returned to me” (6, 8, 9, 10, 11). God is saying be prepared for judgement. God’s people will be chastised and will be punished (12). God is the creator of all things, He is all-knowing, all-powerful, and sovereign (13). This is the God that you are hearing. The Lord of hosts is His name. There is no escape from the all knowing creator.

Applications

- “Principle of relative accountability”. God has given you so many opportunities but you have not repented. You who are hearing this message will be held more accountable. In the case of Balaam, he was so obsessed with cursing Israel that he overlooked the fact that the donkey was speaking. Is anything in your life speaking to you? Did your car speak? Did your

house speak? Did your pet, your computer, your plant speak? Your conscience may not be clear. You have not put things right. God may be trying to say something to you. Take heed, and examine your heart. The Lord of hosts is speaking to you. Repent before God's heavy hand comes down on you.

- "Principle of cause and effect". Final day judgement cannot be averted. God seeks repentance from individuals. Examine yourself whether your type of Christianity is a show. There is godliness without power in it (2Tim 3:5). God has spoken to you so many times, are you taking heed? Have you examined your heart? Heed the warning of God. Plead mercy from God in the name of His son the Lord Jesus Christ. May that happen to you today.