

Lesson 3

Your New Friend: Jesus

“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15).

Jesus calls us friends because he has shared with us the greatest revelation of the ages. Abraham was called the friend of God because of his faith (James 2:23). The fact that Jesus is your best friend does not mean that he deserves any less respect and honor.

Note just some of the titles ascribed to Jesus in the Bible.

1. Philippians 2:9-11 _____
2. John 12:12-15 _____
3. Revelation 19:11-16 _____
4. Matthew 16:16; John 4:25-26 _____
5. Revelation 22:12-13 _____
6. Revelation 22:16 _____

Christians believe Jesus Christ to be deity. Read the following passages: Do you think that they teach that Jesus possesses deity and that he is the Son of God?

7. John 1:1-34 _____

8. Philippians 2:1-11 _____

9. Colossians 2:6-10 _____

Jesus never explicitly claimed, “I am God.” However, he made certain statements that could not have been made by someone less than God. He said that the angels, usually referred to as God’s angels (Luke 12:8-9; 15:10), and the kingdom, usually referred to as the kingdom of God, belonged to him (Matthew 13:41) (Notice that Jesus’ favorite title for himself was the “Son of Man.” Furthermore, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus consistently sets himself up as superior to Moses and to the Law of Moses (Matthew 5-7; Luke 6:20-49). In John’s Gospel, Jesus understood his role as the judge of all mankind

(John 5:22), and he explicitly declared that all would honor him just as they honor the Father (5:23). Jesus also states that the Scriptures testify about him, and he strongly implies that one obtains eternal life only by coming to Him (5:24). Jesus actually made a claim to preexistence: “‘I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘before Abraham was born, I am!’” (John 8:58).

Jesus exercised his prerogative to forgive sins. At a Pharisee’s house a woman washed Jesus’ feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, and poured expensive perfume on them. Jesus then forgave the woman’s sins.

10. What was the reaction of the guests (Luke 7:36-48)? _____
_____.

11. Why did the Pharisees charge Jesus with blasphemy in Mark 2: 5-10? _____
_____.

In the courts of the temple, the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery to Jesus. Jesus invited anyone who was sinless to cast the first stone. He did not condemn the woman, but he exhorted her to leave her life of sin (John 8:3-11).

12. Why did everyone except Jesus leave? _____
_____.

13. Hebrews 4:15 sheds some light on the story in John 8. What does it reveal? _____
_____.

As God’s Son, Jesus has a special relationship to the Father and a special role in creation.

14. What is the Son’s special relationship to the Father (Hebrews 1:2)? _____.

15. Notice the Son’s role in creation (Hebrews 1:2) _____.

The Son is the “radiance of God’s glory” as the ray is the light of the sun (Hebrews 1:3). Verse 3 says that Jesus is “the exact representation of his [God’s] being.” A mark is the exact impression of the seal.

16. In Colossians 1:15, Paul says that Jesus Christ is the “image of the _____
_____.”

Notice that the “firstborn over all creation” in Colossians 1:15, does not mean that Jesus was the first one created. It means that as heir and like all first-born sons, he has certain privileges, rights, and authority over creation. Jesus is not merely a reflection of deity; he is the exact, authentic representation of God’s essence.

God not only created the universe, he sustains it. He is not completely separate from the world and the creatures that he created. The so-called “laws of nature” have been established and they operate by God’s decree.

17. How is nature, i.e., all of creation, sustained (Hebrews 1:3)? _____

Although the passage does not explain exactly how he accomplished it, the writer to the Hebrews mentions God’s way for taking care of humanity’s sin problem

18. The Son provided (Hebrews 1:3) _____.

Christians believe that the vicarious atonement of Christ provided salvation from judgment, deliverance from the power of sin and death, and acceptance by God. Jesus understood it as his mission. His sacrifice distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. Jesus explained that all the Scriptures predicted his suffering.

He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47).

19. Why did Jesus come to earth in the form of a human being (Luke 19:10)? _____

The process by which Jesus came to earth in the form of a human being is called the incarnation.

20. How would he accomplish his mission (Matthew 20:28)? _____

The author of Hebrews writes about the incarnation. Read the entire second chapter of Hebrews. “For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way” (Hebrews 2:17). List three reasons for the incarnation from Hebrews 2:16-18.

21. (2:17) _____.

22. (2:17) _____.

23. (2:18) _____.

Notice the reference to the earthly existence of Christ:

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. (Hebrews 5:7)

The sacrificial death of Christ gave purpose and meaning to the incarnation. Only God himself could provide the perfect sacrifice for sin. There can be no doubt that Jesus possessed a consciousness of both his identity and his mission.

We have studied the purpose of the incarnation. Now let us take a closer look at what the incarnation was and what it meant. First look at Philippians 2:6-11.

24. What was Christ's nature (2:6)? _____.

25. Christ was equal to whom (2:6)? _____.

26. What nature did he take on (2:7)? _____.

27. What likeness and appearance did he assume (2:7-8)? _____.

Christ humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, not just any death, but to death on a cross. Death by crucifixion was for the worse criminals; it was degrading, humbling, and excruciatingly painful. Jesus suffered immensely. As the pure and holy Son of God, he left heaven, humbled himself, and became nothing (2:7). As shown earlier, he did it to supply the sacrifice for the sins of humanity. God exalted Jesus because of his obedience.

28. God exalted Jesus to (2:9) _____.

29. The name of Jesus is (2:9) _____.

30. At the name of Jesus what will everyone do some day (2:10-11)? _____

_____.

This passage speaks of the *kenosis*, or the "self emptying" of Christ. It means that Jesus emptied himself of his prerogatives of deity. He did not cease being God. He voluntarily laid aside the use of his prerogatives as God. Now read John 1:1-14 again. The best description of the incarnation is found in verse 14: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

The story of the birth of Jesus Christ, the actual event of God becoming flesh, is recorded by Matthew and Luke. Matthew makes it clear that Jesus was born of a virgin. His birth was completely miraculous.

31. How did Mary conceive (Matthew 1:18-24)? _____.

The Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, foretold this event eight hundred years before it happened. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14)" Luke records Gabriel's announcement to Mary, and gives more details of the incarnation.

"You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am still a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:31-35)

32. Luke also records that the angels announced the birth of Christ to shepherds (2:8-20).

How do they identify the baby (2:11)? _____, _____.

Jesus promised that he would come again (John 14:3), and he referred to his return a number of times (Matthew 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 42, 44; 25:31; 26:41).

33. Why did Jesus go back to heaven (John 14:1-2)? _____.

34. Why will Jesus return (John 14:3)? _____.

35. Why do you think the angels announced that Jesus would return (Acts 1:11)? _____

_____.

Peter proclaimed the return of Jesus as part of the gospel message (Acts 3: 17-21).

36. Why will Jesus return (Acts 3:21)? _____.

Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15) and all the prophets predicted the coming of one who would turn everyone from their wicked ways (Acts 3:22-26). When you read the entire context of Acts 3:17-21, it is clear who Peter believed that Moses was speaking of in Deuteronomy 18:15. He was the same one the prophets spoke of, the offspring of Abraham who would bless all peoples on earth, the one that God raised up from the dead, and the one who will wipe out the sins of the people and turn them from their wicked ways. Peter was specific. This one was the Christ (Messiah) and Lord. Peter even calls him by name (Acts 3:20).

37. Peter believed Moses was speaking about _____.

Paul wrote about the return of Jesus (Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 10; Titus 2:13), and he referred to it many times. He clearly tells the Thessalonians that the resurrection of the righteous dead will accompany the return of Christ.

According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)

The resurrection and return of Christ have several other implications for believers to consider. Paul tells the Corinthians that at the last trumpet the dead will be raised imperishable and the living will be changed instantaneously (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). The Bible also teaches that the unrighteous will be resurrected (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). The idea of the second coming includes a great final judgment for the unrighteous at some time in the future (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20; 20: 11-15; 21:8).

38. Memory Verses:

For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. (Hebrews 2:17)

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)

39. Action:

Reread Hebrews 2:1-18. Record any observations you make. Especially look for references to the incarnation, Christ's humanity, and reasons for the incarnation, or the extent of the incarnation. For instance, chapter 1 points out that Christ is superior to the angels. What does it mean that God "made him a little lower than the angels" in 2:6 and 2:9? This phrase refers to Jesus during his life on earth. Notice that he is "now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death." It was from an exalted position that Jesus was temporarily made lower than the angels, but notice also that there is a new dimension of joy and triumph at the accomplishment of God's plan of salvation.

40. Rethink the lesson

- Think about some of the titles of Jesus.
- Jesus made certain claims that could only be made by God.
- Jesus seemed to be aware of his divinity.
- Jesus forgives sins.
- Jesus created all things.
- Jesus is the very nature of deity.
- The purpose of the incarnation was that Jesus might be a faithful high priest, that he might make atonement for the sins of the people, and that he could give help to those who are being tempted.
- Jesus was made for a time a little lower than the angels that he might enter the human race. Now he stands highly exalted, with a name above all names, full of joy and triumph. He has completed God's plan of eternal redemption.
- Moses and the prophets told about the coming of Jesus.
- Jesus will return to take the righteous to heaven and judge the unrighteous.

Answers to Lesson 3:

1. Lord.
2. King of Israel.
3. Faithful and True; Word of God; King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
4. Christ, Son of the Living God; Messiah.
5. Alpha and Omega, First and Last, Beginning and End;
6. Root and Offspring of David; bright and Morning Star.
7. Your answer.
8. Your answer.
9. Your answer.
10. They were amazed and said, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"
11. They said, "Only God can forgive sins."
12. Not one of them was sinless except Jesus.
13. Jesus was without sin.
14. Jesus is the Son.
15. God made the universe through the Son.
16. He is the image of the invisible God.
17. By his powerful word.
18. Purification for sins.
19. To seek and to save what was lost.
20. Give his life a ransom.
21. To become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God.
22. That he might make atonement for the sins of the people.
23. To help those who are being tempted.
24. Nature of God.
25. God.
26. A servant.
27. Human likeness, the appearance of a man.

28. To the highest place.
29. Above every name.
30. Bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
31. By the Holy Spirit.
32. A Savior, Christ the Lord.
33. To prepare a place for his disciples.
34. To take his disciples with him so that they might be with Jesus.
35. Your answer.
36. To restore everything.
37. Jesus.