

Growing With Jesus

Intro: Who is Jesus and do you really know Him? The world (religious as well) present such a diverse image of Jesus that even the most devoted disciples may find themselves confused. Walter Kasper wrote: “Extreme notions...see God dressed as a Father Christmas, or slipping into human nature like someone putting on dungarees in order to repair the world after breakdown. The biblical and church doctrine that Jesus was a complete man with human intellect and human freedom, does not seem to prevail in the average Christian’s head.”

Jesus asked His apostles questions about Himself and who He is. Mat. 16:13-19 “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? ¹⁴And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. ¹⁵He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? ¹⁶And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ¹⁷And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ¹⁸And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” This question “Whom say ye that I am?” is still the most important question for each individual to answer. It is not what others believe, think, or practice, but who do you believe that He was and is? How you answer will make all the difference in your life and eternity; John 8:24 “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.”

I. THE WORD OF GOD

A. John 1:1-2, 14 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God...¹⁴And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

1. He was God, but also with God.
 - a. Shows there are at least 2 persons who are God (partakers of the divine nature).
 - b. There is also a third—the Holy Spirit; Acts 5:3-4 “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? ⁴Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”
2. It is not a multiplicity of Gods, but one God.
 - a. Deu. 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:”
 - b. That is there is one divine nature (Spirit) which all three possess.
 - c. The term *Godhead* helps us to understand the relationship within that divine Spirit which is God.
 - (1) Acts 17:29 “Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.”
 - (2) Rom. 1:20 “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:”
 - (3) Col. 2:9 “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”
3. Jesus’ eternal relationship with God was called the Word.
 - a. He came to us as Emmanuel, God with us.
 - b. Isa. 7:14 “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
 - c. Mat. 1:23 “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

B. He was made “Flesh”

1. He did not just inhabit an earthly body.
 - a. Phi. 2:6-8 “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”
 - b. Heb. 2:14-18 “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; ¹⁵And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. ¹⁶For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. ¹⁷Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”
2. While all men die, Jesus became man to die.
 - a. 2 Cor. 5:21 “For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”
 - b. Heb. 2:9 “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

C. Jesus was in every sense God, and in every sense man.

1. How?
 - a. Mat. 1:20-23 “But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. ²¹And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. ²²Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ²³Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”
 - b. Luke 1:26-38
2. Luke 1:35 “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”
3. In Him was the uniting of God and man.

II. O’ TO BE LIKE THEE.**A. We sing the song “O’ To Be Like Thee.”****B. There are many ways we cannot be like Him.**

1. Jesus was sinless, we cannot be.
2. He was God, we cannot be God.
3. He performed miracles, we cannot because the age of miracles has ended.

C. There are many ways we can be like Him.

1. Rom. 8:29 “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”
 - a. God did not predestinate the individual, but the class of people that He would accept.
 - b. That group is those who obey Him.
 - (1) John 14:15, 21-23 “If ye love me, keep my commandments....He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. ²²Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself

unto us, and not unto the world? ²³Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

- (2) Rom. 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.”
- (3) 1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”
- c. He predetermined to accept those who conform to the image of Christ.
- d. Jimmy Allen wrote: “He did not predestine that His children would be obedient, but that the obedient would be His children.”
- e. Howard Winters wrote: “God did not predestine individuals, but the kind of character each individual must possess in order to be saved.”
2. The lifestyle we are to live is the life He lived.
3. He gave us an example of how to live.
 - a. Gal. 4:19 “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,”
 - b. 1 Pet. 2:21 “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”

III. HOW DID JESUS GROW?

A. Luke 2:52 “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”

B. Very little is revealed to us of Jesus’ early life.

1. They escaped to Egypt from the wrath of Herod the Great.
 - a. Joseph was warned not to return to Judea, and instead went to Nazareth.
 - b. Mat. 2:16-23
2. In Nazareth; Luke 2:40 “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.”
3. At 30 Jesus came from Nazareth to be baptized; Mark 1:9 “And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.”
4. Thus, He spent His entire life (with the exceptions of Bethlehem and Egypt) growing up in Nazareth.

C. Jesus trip to Jerusalem at 12 years old.

1. Luke 2:41-52
 - a. His parents made yearly trips, but this appears to be His first; Luke 2:41-42 “Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.”
 - b. When His parents left, Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.
 - (1) People traveled in groups and they thought He was among their relatives and friends.
 - (2) After going a days journey they discover that He is not with them.
 - c. After 3 days of searching they find Him in the Temple astonishing the learned men of the Law.
 - d. Mary chastised Him for putting them through such misery, but notice His response; Luke 2:49 “And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”
 - e. He knew who He was and who His real Father was and understood His role in the world.

2. He returned with His parents and was subject to them; Luke 2:51 “And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.”
 - a. While He knew who He was, He remained subject to His parents for 18 more years.
 - b. While the God in the flesh, I am sure He grew like any other boy of His day (being the Son of Man).
 - c. Burton Hoffman states: “He who ‘emptied Himself’ and became a man found it needful to pass through the helplessness of infancy, the ignorance of babyhood, and the incompetence of adolescence, just like all men.”

IV. JESUS GREW IN WISDOM.

A. This deals with His intellect.

1. He was raised in an environment of learning.
2. Prior to His birth, Jewish authorities had instituted mandatory public education for every male.
 - a. It was centered around the Scriptures.
 - b. It began with the Mitra.
 - (1) Like our elementary school.
 - (2) They learned reading, writing, and arithmetic.
 - c. The secondary level was the Mishnah—a study of the oral law and the Pentateuch.
 - d. It is probably that Jesus was exposed to both of these.
3. It is doubtful that He attended any school of higher learning.
 - a. John 7:15 “And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?”
 - b. This means that He did not attend any of their schools.

B. But additionally, He grew in wisdom.

1. The difference between knowledge and wisdom.
 - a. Knowledge is the gaining of information.
 - b. Wisdom is the knowledge of how to use that information in everyday life.
 - c. Remember the movie *Rainman*, based on a true story of a person who had an amazing ability to remember things, but had no common horse-sense.
2. No doubt Jesus wisdom was divine.
3. How do we gain it?
 - a. It is to be sought; Pro. 4:5-7 “Get wisdom, get understanding: forget *it* not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. ⁶Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. ⁷Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *therefore* get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”
 - b. It cannot be taught, you teach facts.
 - c. It is gained through deliberate, disciplined, difficult, diligent effort and experience.
 - d. Jam. 1:5 “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

V. JESUS GREW PHYSICALLY.**A. This would include gaining in height, but applies to maturing physically in every respect.**

1. Isa. 53:2 “For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.”
2. This indicates that he was ordinary looking, there is nothing physically that would cause Him to stand out in a crowd.
3. Often He is depicted as someone who is effeminate in appearance.
 - a. This would not be the case, being a carpenter, working outdoors.
 - b. The work of a carpenter would have made him stronger than most.
 - c. Consider some of His actions.
 - (1) Cleansing the Temple twice.
 - (2) The events surrounding the crucifixion show that He would have been very strong.

B. We should not do things that harm the physical body.

1. Paul’s statements.
 - a. 1 Cor. 6:19-20 “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”
 - b. 2 Cor. 6:16 “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
2. We should not defile our bodies, whether without or within.
3. We should also take positive steps to aid us in having good health.
 - a. Taking proper medication; 1 Tim. 5:23 “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.”
 - b. 1 Tim. 4:8 “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”
 - (1) There is a comparison made here.
 - (2) Spiritual exercise is healthier for the present world and the world to come.
 - (3) However, physical exercise can help our overall mental and physical health.
 - (4) If we concern ourselves only with the physical then we do damage to our souls.
 - (5) 2 Cor. 4:16-18 “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; ¹⁸While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.”

VI. JESUS GREW SPIRITUALLY.**A. He grew in favor with God.****B. God was pleased with His Son.**

1. Mat. 3:17 “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

2. Mat. 17:5 “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

C. Jesus life was the doing of the Father’s Will.

1. John 4:32-34 “But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. ³³Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat? ³⁴Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”
2. John 5:30 “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”
3. Even in His death
 - a. Mat. 26:39 “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.”
 - b. John 10:18 “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”
 - c. And when He died, He gave Himself into the hands of the Father; Luke 23:46 “And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”
4. Heb. 10:7 “Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.”

D. We should have the same desire to please the Father.

VII. JESUS GREW SOCIALLY.

A. He grew in favor with man.

1. Jesus, while growing up met with the approval of those around Him.
2. It indicates He did not create problems for others.
3. He would have been obedient to His parents; Eph. 6:1-2 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ²Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)”

B. Jesus was a social being.

1. Sometimes criticized for it.
 - a. Mat. 9:11 “And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?”
 - b. Mat. 11:18-19 “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. ¹⁹The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.”
 - (1) Does not mean He was a drunkard.
 - (2) Means He participated in social events.
2. John MacArthur wrote: “He had individual intimate contact with many hundreds of people as He talked with them, healed their diseases, forgave their sins, and called them to follow Him. But Jesus’ critics ridiculously exaggerated His normal activities, charging Him with being a gluttonous man and a drunkard.”
3. Jesus first miracle was at a social event, the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee (John 2).

C. Sometimes we think that having favor with others is not important.

1. The early church also thought it was important; Acts 2:47 “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

2. We are to live so our enemies will eventually find favor with you; 1 Pet. 3:16
“Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.”

D. It is not done by compromising our convictions, but living righteously in the midst of a sinful world.

1. Too many are blending in with the world, instead of living distinctive lives.
2. When the Christian is in the world that is good, but when the world gets into the Christian, that is bad.
3. Jesus was different from the world, but He was in the world.

Conclusion: We should grow as Jesus grew: in wisdom, physically, spiritually, and socially. We should be lights in a world of darkness.