

## What's the Message – Lesson 92

Today we begin our study of the New Testament, with the first of a series of lessons from Jesus.

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Savior. Lord, we pray that through these studies you would guide us to gain a deeper understanding of the lessons Jesus taught His disciples, so that we will all be able to be a better reflection of Him, and shine a Christian light into our world. Amen.

In our last lesson we saw how God had used the history of great empires to shape the world for the coming of His Son. Today we want to begin a series of studies on the lessons that Jesus taught His disciples, and how that applies to us. We should explain to our listeners that the format in this series of studies will be somewhat different from that used in our Old Testament studies. Those studies were based chronologically, progressing steadily through the 39 books there.

In our New Testament studies we will proceed by theme, or doctrine, rather than by book. In our close last week, we said that this lesson would be about Jesus as True God. But Teacher, just what does that statement mean?

To put it into context, go back to our very first lesson, to Genesis, chapter one, verse one. How does the Bible start? With these words: *In the beginning God created . . .* And how does St. John start his gospel? He says: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Note well the parallelism here. St. John is telling us by starting his gospel this way that the New Covenant is a continuation of the Old, and is based on that first Covenant.

He then goes on to say: *He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.* Then in verse 14 St. John concludes this point by saying: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.* In other words, God came down from heaven and took upon Himself our human flesh.

This is exactly the opposite of what some religions teach today, religions such as the Mormons and the New Age Movement that claim man can become a god.

Let us be very clear on this, man can not become God. This is the false lie that Satan used to seduce Eve when he said in Genesis chapter three, verse four, *you will be like God*. It is Satan's first lie, and the one which he has used to mislead mankind ever since. No, man can never become God, but God can, and did in the person of Jesus, become man. Let's look at some of the evidence we have to support this claim.

First, there are dozens of prophetic statements, starting with Genesis, chapter 3, verse 15, where at the very moment of man's fall into sin God says to Satan: *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel*. In other words, a descendant of Eve will crush Satan and all his power, but Satan will strike a wounding blow. Later, Moses makes this statement in Deuteronomy 18, Verse 15: *The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to Him*.

The Psalms have frequent Messianic references, and Isaiah is absolutely loaded with them, particularly the entire chapter 53, as we have studied. Let's consider just one example from Isaiah, in chapter 9, verse six: *For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*. In other words, make no doubt about it, a human baby will be born that is God taking on human flesh.

We have seen in our previous studies some of the Messianic prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Micah, and Zechariah, and they will not be repeated here, but they will be given in a listing of all the major prophecies in our study aid for this lesson.

Many will contend that in none of these prophecies is the name of Yeshua given, or in English, Jesus. This does not occur until the

angel announces it to Mary in Luke chapter one, verse 31. But at least for nearly two thousand years, from Abraham on, his descendants understood these prophecies to refer to The Messiah, “the Anointed One.” And what does Jesus himself, and His disciples have to say about this person from Nazareth? As Rev. Harley Swiggum summarizes it: “Jesus claimed pre-existence with the Father in John 17:5 – *And now Father; glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began;* then said (in John 8:58) that He existed before Abraham – *I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am.* Through St. John He declared that He held the power of death (in Revelation 1:17-18) and the gift of eternal life in His hands (John 8:51). He proclaimed that He had authority to forgive sins (one such example is found in the gospel of Mark, chapter two, verse 5), and He spoke and acted with an authority which amazed those confronted by Him (see Mark 1:27 and 4:41; Matthew 7:28-29).”

We can add to this list a few more examples. In John 3:34 and 12:49 Jesus claims that His words are the words of God: *For I do not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent Me commanded Me what to say and how to say it.* And in Mark 9:37 Jesus says: *whoever welcomes Me does not welcome Me but the One who sent Me.* And in Luke 10:16 Jesus adds: *He who listens to you listens to Me; and he who rejects you rejects Me; but he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.*

The prophets, the disciples, and Jesus make it very clear that He is God in human flesh. But, of course, not everyone agreed, and the reactions were violent, leading to the death of our Lord, which was followed by His triumphant resurrection. Ultimately, the question of whether or not Jesus is True God comes down to one event with the disciples, in Matthew 16:13-16, where we read: *When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, Who do people say the Son of Man is? They replied, Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. But what about*

*you, He asked. Who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

Who do you say that Jesus is? It is the question of the ages. It is the most important question each and everyone of us must answer. And answer it we must, for it means either eternal life in the bosom of God, or damnation to eternal separation from God.

Next time we will study Jesus as True Man.