

Who is Jesus?

February 17th, 2015, Kichijouji Bible Study
Gotthold Beck

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2015年2月17日、吉祥寺学び会
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Mark

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1:5 People from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were flocking to him, being baptized by him while they confessed their sins.

1:6 Now John was dressed in camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist. He ate grasshoppers and wild honey.

1:7 He kept proclaiming, "The one who is coming after me is stronger than I am, and I am not worthy to bend down and untie his sandal straps.

1:8 I baptized you with water, but it is he who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

1:10 Just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens split open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

1:11 Then a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love. I am pleased with you!"

1:12 At once the Spirit drove him into the wilderness.

1:13 He was in the wilderness for 40 days being tempted by Satan. He was among wild animals, and angels were ministering to him.

1:14 Now after John had been arrested, Jesus went to Galilee and proclaimed the gospel about the kingdom of God.

1:15 He said, "The time is now! The kingdom of God is near! Repent, and keep believing the gospel!"

[International Standard Version]

Yesterday was the birthday of brother Sadayoshi Shigeta. According to him, we are referred to as 'senior' after we attain the age of 90 and until then, we are all young. So, this gathering today should be called the gathering of youth, shouldn't it? Why don't we sing 'Happy Birthday' for brother Shigeta? I am sorry, now he has to wait for another year until his next birthday.

Today, I would like to discuss one of the most important questions. That question is this: Who is the Lord Jesus? I guess this is an extremely important question.

When we hear about someone we haven't met or

see them in person, very often the first impression has a decisive impact. Here, let us consider what kind of person Jesus is, whom we have never met or heard about, from the first impression we receive from this chapter 1 of Mark.

Our first impression after reading this chapter is that Jesus was a person of great integrity. Jesus had absolute power and authority. What kind of man is Jesus? Among so many questions, this must be one of the most critical ones.

Many books have been written by many authors to answer this question. However, there is only one book which has the authority to give the right answer, which is, needless to say, the Bible. Let us look at some snapshots of Jesus, so to speak, through the Bible.

When we place pictures into albums, we usually write some caption or a simple description under each photograph for later reference. Likewise, let us think of some captions to various snapshots of Jesus to understand his characteristics from each.

Let us begin by asking John the Baptist, "Tell me what kind of man Jesus is?" John knew Jesus since his childhood as his relative. He must have known a lot about Jesus in fine detail.

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John said that Jesus was way stronger than himself, had the authority to baptize with the Holy Spirit and thus, is nobody but God. So, what should be the most appropriate caption for the first snapshot of Jesus?

John the Baptist answered that Jesus was a strong man and a man of power. When John said that Jesus had more strength than him, it was not a matter of degree but he meant that they were as different as heaven and earth.

That is to say, while John baptized people with water, Jesus baptized them with the Holy Spirit. This

implies that unlike John, who was a human being after all, Jesus was nobody but God. As is the nature of human beings, even John might have misjudged the nature of other people.

These kinds of things happen very often in our lives today. Let's say that a young man falls in love with a woman. He believes that she is the most wonderful woman in this world. Very often, men are apt to view women they love as much more beautiful than they actually are. When young men are in love, they tend to be under an illusion which may even lead to idol worship of their lovers.

However, after he marries her, he soon begins to discover her faults and very often, he even ends up being totally disappointed with his wife. Just like this, misjudgment can lead people to big disappointment.

Indeed, we all misjudge other people all the time. As a human being, even John might have done the same. Instead of asking John alone, who was human after all, let us ask the same question to the Lord God this time. That is to say, we want to ask this question to the Lord God himself, who has the supreme authority above all things.

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What kind of answer do you expect from the Lord God? The Lord God would never give an evasive answer or answer with another riddle. He would never do such things. The Lord God has clearly mentioned that the Lord Jesus is his begotten son.

This exactly is the authoritative answer of the Lord God. This is the answer which even little children would accept. The Lord God has made it very clear that Jesus is the Son of God. Now, we all realize who Jesus is.

It is because the Lord God himself has stated so. Thus, we can add a caption to the second picture, "Jesus is the Son of God."

After that, Jesus was tempted by the devil.

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We can see from these verses that Jesus was put into an extremely difficult situation when he was tempted by the devil. Satan tried to tempt Jesus in various ways in order to spoil him. The Bible states that even very strong and good persons may fall into temptation when they give in to their desires or act on those desires.

James

1:14 Instead, each person is tempted by his own desire, being lured and trapped by it.

It did not happen to Jesus. Jesus knew no sin at all. As it is written, when that desire becomes pregnant, it gives birth to sin and when that sin grows up, it gives birth to death. Similarly, all sinners are controlled by their inner sins. However, Jesus was only tempted externally, not internally.

In resisting the three temptations, Jesus proved that he voluntarily obeyed his Father God and he did so at his own will. When Jesus was absolutely obedient to his Father God, unlike Adam and Eve who fell into the hands of the devil, he showed in his own deed the perfect victory he won over the devil.

Had Jesus been defeated at this time, the whole human race would have become the slaves of the devil forever. The Bible says that when Adam gave in to the temptation of the devil, sin entered the whole human race.

Romans

5:12 Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death resulted from sin, therefore everyone dies, because everyone has sinned.

5:13 Certainly sin was in the world before the Law was given, but no record of sin is kept when there is no Law.

5:14 Nevertheless, death ruled from the time of Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the same way Adam did when he disobeyed. He is a foreshadowing of the one who would come.

5:15 But God's free gift is not like Adam's offense. For if many people died as the result of one man's offense, how much more have God's grace and the free gift given through the kindness of one man, Jesus the Messiah, been showered on many people!

5:16 Nor can the free gift be compared to what came through the man who sinned. For the sentence that followed one man's offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift brought

justification, even after many offenses.

5:17 For if, through one man, death ruled because of that man's offense, how much more will those who receive such overflowing grace and the gift of righteousness rule in life because of one man, Jesus the Messiah!

It was because Jesus relied a hundred percent on the Father God, that he could win the victory over the devil. Jesus was tempted for 40 days by the devil. It was also recorded in the Bible that Moses stayed in the mountain for 40 days. For Moses, it must have meant a wonderful fellowship with the Lord.

Exodus

24:18 When Moses went up on the mountain, he went into the center of the cloud and was on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights.

34:28 While Moses was there with the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights, he did not eat or drink. He wrote the Ten Commandments, the words of the covenant, on the tablets.

A prophet called Elijah also stayed in the wilderness for 40 days, according to the Bible. It is recorded in the Bible that during these 40 days, not only did the Lord stay close to him and support him but the angel of the Lord also came to provide him with food.

1 Kings

19:4 (Elijah) ran for a day's journey deep into the wilderness. He found a juniper tree, sat down under it, and prayed that he could die. He asked God, "Enough! Lord! Take my life, because I'm not better than my ancestors!"

19:5 Then he lay down and went to sleep under the juniper tree. All of a sudden, there was an angel, who kept grabbing him and telling him, "Get up! Eat!"

19:6 So he looked around, and there near his head was a muffin sitting on top of some heated stones, along with a jar of water. Elijah ate and drank and then lay down again.

19:7 Later, the angel of the Lord came a second time, grabbed him, and said "Get up! Eat! The journey ahead is too difficult for you!"

19:8 So Elijah got up, ate and drank, and survived on that one meal for 40 days and nights as he set out on his journey to Horeb, God's mountain.

While Jesus, the servant of God, was in the wilderness for 40 days, there must have been many animals around him who had nothing to eat. While Moses had fellowship with the Lord God and Elijah was protected by the angel, Jesus was alone with beasts. Jesus was the Creator of all things. When the creator created all living things, animals came to see Adam and were given names by him, according to the Bible.

At that time, Adam had no reason to fear or be scared of these animals. However, because of the sins Adam and Eve committed, these animals were turned into fierce beasts. In the millennial kingdom to come, all beasts will lose their ferocity and turn harmless just like they used to be in paradise and the nursing child will play with vipers, as the Bible says.

Isaiah

11:6 The wolf will live with the lamb; the leopard will lie down with the young goat. The calf and the lion will graze together, and a little child will lead them.

11:7 The cow and the bear will graze, and their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

11:8 The nursing child will play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on vipers' dens.

11:9 They will neither harm nor destroy on my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Animals around Jesus were apparently wild beasts that were fierce in nature. However, as they recognized the characteristics of the Creator in Jesus, they could not cause any harm to him. It is written in the scripture that Jesus was surrounded, not only by the wild beasts, but by the angels too who served him.

The devil could not even touch Jesus. We can give a simple caption to the snapshot of Jesus taken at this moment, "The Victor." The Lord Jesus was led to the wilderness and was tempted by the devil. When the devil saw the resolute attitude of Jesus, he had no choice but to retreat.

We can say that Jesus is the victor over the devil. When he resisted all temptations of the devil, Jesus' mission activity in the world was initiated.

Mark

1:14 Now after John had been arrested, Jesus went to Galilee and proclaimed the gospel about the kingdom of God.

1:15 He said, "The time is now! The kingdom of God is near! Repent, and keep believing the gospel!"

These two verses marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry and service. When he said these words, Jesus revealed himself as the Lord of the kingdom of God. We can also see from these verses that, in those days, John the Baptist was arrested and imprisoned.

It must have been very dangerous for Jesus to proclaim the gospel under such circumstances. It

was apparently very risky. Nevertheless, Jesus did not fear persecution from King Herod but proclaimed boldly that this world should be dominated by the authority of his own and the glory of the Lord.

Jesus proclaimed with these words, "The time is now! The kingdom of God is near! Repent, and keep believing the gospel!" The kingdom of God, as mentioned here, refers to total control by the Lord on all aspects of the lives of those who have accepted and believed in Jesus as their savior.

The Gospel is something totally new. It is the only way that leads us to salvation. For the believers of Jesus, it means their liberation. And it was to reveal this wonderful arrival and explain the inspiration from the Lord God that the Father God sent Jesus, his only begotten Son into this world.

When we think of how boldly Jesus proclaimed the Gospel with his strength and authority without fearing the power of the darkness even though it was in the middle of the darkest age, we come up with the expression, "the utmost authority" as the caption that best describes our Lord Jesus.

Jesus did not fear anyone but proclaimed the Gospel boldly, candidly, and with authority. It was not the authority of men but of the Lord God. This makes us realize that Jesus is still the ultimate authority in the universe.

There was a family in Germany in which both the father and his son were pastors. The son worked hard to prepare for his first sermon and came to feel confident about his work. After his first sermon was finished without any noticeable mistake, he came to his father triumphantly and asked, "What did you think, father? How was my very first sermon? "

The father simply answered, "Not bad." When the son of the pastor heard this, he lapsed sullenly into silence. His father saw this and said to his son, "I noticed that you did not mention Jesus at all in your sermon, did you?" The son answered immediately, "Father, in the Bible verses I quoted in my sermon today, the name of Jesus did not appear at all. So, I had no reason to talk about Jesus, did I?"

When the pastor heard what his son had said, he answered quietly, "You are wrong. Even though the name of Jesus Christ is not clearly mentioned, every verse, every chapter of the Bible is written about Jesus, regardless of whether it is direct or indirect."

He continued, "You should not forget that the entire Bible was written to explain Jesus himself and Jesus is always placed at the center." As he mentioned, the central subject of the Scripture is Jesus himself.

For this reason, we need to keep asking ourselves

the question, "What kind of man is Jesus?" throughout our lives. So far, we have learned through the chapter 1 of the Gospel according to Mark, that John the Baptist first described Jesus as a strong man, a man who had power.

However, when John said that Jesus was more powerful than him, it was not a matter of comparison but he meant that they were fundamentally different just like heaven and earth. That is to say, while John baptized with water, the Lord Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit, which indicates that, unlike John who was human after all, the Lord Jesus was nobody but the Lord God. Who is Jesus? He is the man who has power, the Son of God, the victor and a man of the highest authority. It is the ultimate blessing for us to know this man, Jesus, isn't it?

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