



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: LESSON 106

Acknowledged by others as human – Apart from the accounts of His birth and events in His life as a young child, and then His going up to Jerusalem at the age of twelve with His family to celebrate the Passover, there is nothing else written in the Bible about this period in Jesus' life, apart from the fact that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). The next thing we read about Jesus is His baptism at the Jordan, and then the beginning of His earthly ministry.

There is no specific mention of the life of Jesus in those 18 or so years, as a young man. This has led to many presumptuous and bizarre stories about these so called "lost years of Jesus", but without a shred of historical evidence, these stories belong to the realm of fantasy and not reality. However, what is interesting is that in the Gospels we read that those who lived in Nazareth, Jesus' hometown, and who knew Him and watched Him grow up, regarded Jesus as an ordinary person, the "carpenter's son." To them He was nothing remarkable (Matthew 13:54-56). Contrary to the extra-biblical fanciful stories, this indicates that Jesus had lived a normal, regular life while growing up in Nazareth; not as a wonder boy, but just like any boy and young man. Nothing seemed to be out of the ordinary. For the town's people, Jesus was a regular human being, and so they rejected Him as being anything but a man (v. 57).

Not only was He rejected by the people of Nazareth, but His extended relatives (Mark 6:4) and even members of His own family also rejected Him as anything but an ordinary person (John 7:1-5). Another significant statement we find regarding this is from the lips of Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, who presenting Jesus to the crowd said, "Behold the Man!" (John 19:5). Though Pilate uttered what seemed a natural statement to him, unbeknownst to him this was a divinely providential declaration, for Jesus had come as a man, the perfect man, the last Adam, to do what the Father had required of man.

Acknowledged by believers as human – Aside from His enemies and those who were ignorant of who Jesus was, those who believed in Him and followed Him, knowing full well who He was, referred to Him as a man (Matthew 1:1; John 1:29-30; Acts 2:22; 17:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 45, 47).

Prophesied in the Old Testament as human – Not only was Jesus acknowledged as being truly human by those around Him, but He was also prophesied as such in the Old Testament. He was promised in the first few pages of Scripture as the Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15), and later as the Seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:7; Galatians 3:16). He was foretold as being a prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18), a priest like Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4), and a king like David (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23-24). The prophets spoke of Him as the Root of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1, 10), the righteous Branch of David (Jeremiah 33:15; Zechariah 3:8; 6:12), and the Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 42:1-9; 52:13-53:12).

Therefore it is obvious that the entire Old Testament declared the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, into the world, not as an angel, or a phantom; or some unfamiliar supernatural being, but as a man, a real human being, able to identify with and represent the human race.

Declared by Himself as human – Jesus also referred to Himself as a man (John 8:39-40).

Though Jesus was the eternal and immortal God, by entering the world He assumed an additional nature, our human nature, albeit without sin. To those who watched Him grow up, He was just another human being. To those who believed in Him, though they recognized and worshiped Him as divine, they also were cognizant of the fact that they were walking, talking, eating and fellowshiping with a real man. And this is exactly what the prophets had foretold about Him. All these emphasize the completeness of Jesus' incarnation, proving the veritable humanity of Jesus, which was crucial in fulfilling the good works of His Father; in accomplishing redemption for fallen human beings.