

The Lord Jesus Christ: A Series of Ten Studies

Study 4: The Son of Man – Part 2

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Bible Studies for Enquirers and New Believers
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Reading: Psalm 8

Jesus' Communication

Jesus used the following different methods of communication in deepening the understanding of his hearers. He conceals and yet reveals by the use of:

- Illustrations
 - In Matthew 9:6 Jesus does not say who exactly he is. He poses the question which arises from the claim that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. Much later he predicts his own suffering. He mentions it first to his disciples and then others heard of it too. He wanted to gain the attention of the people of his day. He was finally willing for a confrontation but he wanted to be heard first. Stephen had grasped the meaning of the title 'Son of Man'. He had a vision of the risen Lord standing at the right hand of God in heaven, glorified and ascended (Acts 7:56).
- Parables
 - Ordinary people did not generally understand Jesus' parables but they, no doubt, remembered the stories (Matthew 13:10-17,34-43). Concealing truth in parables raised questions and avoided confrontation. Some understood and accepted the truth. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 13:43).
- Miracles
 - There are seven special miracles described in the Gospel according to John for which a particular Greek word meaning 'sign' (in Greek – 'semeion') is used. John states the purpose of these miracles or signs as showing forth Jesus' glory, producing faith in his disciples (John 2:11). The other Greek word used for 'miracles' in the Gospels means 'act of power' (in Greek – 'dunamis')
- Significant Events in Jesus' Life
 - These events include his baptism, transfiguration and triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
- Conversations
 - One conversation in which Jesus gradually revealed himself was with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42). Sometimes he, by his replies, gave a new dimension to something that was familiar. He challenged people's existing thinking. For example, when he was told that his mother and brothers wanted to see him he did not answer directly but said: "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it"

(Luke 8:21). Jesus knew the real questions behind questions as in the case of the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18): He excelled in answering the real questions of the heart as in his conversation with Nicodemus in John 3. He recognized when people were not really asking questions but trying to test and trap him. He sometimes replied by raising a question for the questioners to answer first (Matthew 21:23-27).

- Confrontation
 - In Matthew 22:41, Jesus speaks out boldly asking a question. He knew "his hour" of death was, near. The time of his full revealing was coming. He did not want to close the subject of who he was but to open it up more clearly by questioning.
- Fulfillment of Prophecy
 - Jesus sometimes claimed to be fulfilling Old Testament prophecy (Luke 18:31-33). By this he revealed more about himself. Listeners probably did not fully understand his claims but later after his resurrection some must have remembered his teaching and grasped its meaning (Luke 24:44-47).
- Silence
 - Jesus wrote in the sand and said nothing (John 8:6). He used silence to allow people's consciences to speak to them, to make people curious and to give time for a point to sink in. Sometimes he urged his disciples to keep silent too "Tell no man the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead" (Matthew 17:9).
- Symbolic Actions
 - Jesus sometimes used actions as a way of teaching. Examples of this include the cleansing of the Temple (John 2:14-17), the washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:1-20) and the placing of a child in the middle of a group (Matthew 18:2).
- Casting out Evil Spirits
 - Sometimes the evil spirits declared who Jesus was (Mark 3:11, 5:7).
- Teaching and Preaching
 - Jesus was sometimes quite explicit in his teaching especially with his disciples (Luke 9:48).
- Special Significance and Interpretations of Religious Festivals
 - An example is the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:37-38). Thus in different ways Jesus taught and demonstrated that the Son of Man had come to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.