

# The Invasion

Number four in a nine-part series on what we believe

October 3 & 4, 2009

## Intro:

Annie tells me that *the Christmas stuff is already displayed* at Costco. It's apparently been out for some time. I don't know if I'm ready for this! I wanted summer to keep going.

I *am* looking forward to *some aspects* of the winter season. Like Christmas carols. *I hope I don't hear them until around Thanksgiving*, but I do like them, *especially with pumpkin pie*.

The classic carols often incorporate Scripture in telling the story of the coming of Christ to earth. Every Christmas we're reminded that the Messiah's arrival was foretold. Jesus perfectly fulfilled the prophecies. From more than 700 years before Jesus was born, Isaiah predicted that he would be Emmanuel, which means, "God with us" (Is 7:14).

We've been thinking about what we believe and why. Today I will talk about Jesus - the greatest of all topics!

When we think of Christ's identity, the main idea that should be in our minds is that *God came here*. Jesus is *God with us!* He *invaded* the world that had rebelled against his rule. He slipped in behind enemy lines to launch a counter-offensive and rescue us from ourselves. He came on a mission **to seek and save the lost**. And he accomplished this by dying for our sins and then conquering death in his resurrection.

Through this series on the foundations of the faith, I'm committed to providing you with training so you can explain what you believe. So the first half of this message will be all about *equipping*. In the second half I will aim at *encouraging* you. Once I've led you through a *biblical survey* to equip you to confidently represent Christ, I'll just share personally about him.

I didn't include any fill-in-the-blank spots in the outline this week. It is just designed to be a resource to back up what you believe about Jesus.

## 1. Who is Jesus Christ?

Christians are on earth to point people to Jesus. There are lots of ideas out there about his identity so we need to be prepared to communicate the truth from the Bible. It is a reliable record, written by eyewitness. When you open the Bible to answer the question: *who is Jesus Christ*, you can start with his own claims about his identity.

### What did Jesus say about himself?

• **He claimed to be equal with God Jn 10:30-33** the religious leaders picked up stones to execute Jesus. Why? What was the charge? They explained to him, it was ...for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God! That was what eventually led to his crucifixion.

• **He claimed to impart eternal life (Jn 5:21)**. Hard for a normal person to do, in fact, it's impossible!

• **He claimed he'd judge the world at the end (Mt 7:21-23)**. This would be megalomania in a mere mortal.

• **He claimed he could forgive sin Mk 2:5**. The leaders responded: **6 - Blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?** Here's their point: If you stepped on John's toes, for me to say, *I forgive you* would be meaningless. It would be *for him* to say that - *he's* the one you hurt.

• **He claimed to be eternal Jn 8:56-59** is another time when the religious leaders began to pick up stones to kill

Jesus. He had said before Abraham was born, I am! They understood his *use of God's name* as the ultimate blasphemy.

- **He claimed to have divine glory** in heaven from before the time the earth began (Jn 17:5).

- **He claimed to answer prayer** (Jn 14:14). No legitimate human religious leader can say this. *If your pastor starts acting like this, find another church!* Only God can hear and answer prayer.

- **He claimed omnipresence** Mt. 28:20 - I am with you always. No one else can do that. Clearly, Jesus claimed to be absolutely unique.

### What did others say about Jesus?

- **He is called Creator** and sustainer Col 1:16 - by him all things were created...in him all things hold together. This is more than the work of a good teacher.

- **He is called God**

  - ...by the prophets Is 9:6 - mighty God.

  - ...in **John's prologue** (Jn 1:1,14). The divine Word **became flesh and dwelt among us**.

  - ...by **Thomas** (Jn 20:27-29). He saw the evidence.

  - ...by **Paul** Rom. 9:5 ...Christ... is God over all!

- **He is worshipped** After the incident with Peter in the sea: Mat. 14:33 - those who were in the boat worshiped him. Jews were strict monotheists.

S - The Word of God presents Jesus as God the Word.

T - That's a quick biblical survey of the divine nature of Jesus Christ. Time to change gears, not in direction - we're still talking about Jesus - but I want to do so *more personally*.

I think you have what you need to *equip* you, now I want to *encourage* you. So...

## 2. Who is Jesus Christ to me?

*(Some personal sharing to encourage you to passionately follow Christ)*

These thoughts are not off the top of my head so much as from the bottom of my heart.

### He is my Savior.

*He came, lived, taught, and died. He forgave my sins.*

*He will usher me into eternity.*

*Why? He died so I can live.*

*What do you give to someone who has given his life for you?*

*You give your life in return!*

### He is my Lord.

This means he is over me and I am under him. He is my boss and I'm in submission. I am in subjection; I am a subject in his Kingdom. He is the king who reigns. He rules over me. He calls the shots, so I don't stumble haphazardly through a morass of indecision when it comes to the direction of my life. I am not aimless. I have purpose as I live life for the one who died for me.

I want to tell you about a *spiritual experience* I had recently. It took place while I was listening to music, in fact I was singing along. *(That can happen. I hope you experience this as well. The words of a song take on tremendous significance and you address God, engaging in worship.)*

The odd part of the story is that this religious experience occurred while listening to Aretha Franklin.

The even odder part, *and this is hard to say*, is that the song is called, **You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman!**

Now I've got to clarify: I don't feel anything like a natural woman, but listen to these lyrics:

*Looking out on the morning rain I used to feel so uninspired and when I knew I had to face another day Lord it made me feel so tired. Before the day I met you, life was so unkind. You're the key to my piece of mind.*

That's an okay start but it gets better.

The *chorus* comes here. It doesn't apply to me. But the next verse sure does: *When my soul was in the lost and found, you came along to claim it. Now I'm no longer doubtful of what I'm living for and if I make you happy I don't need to do more.*

You not only make a *difference* in my life, you make *the difference* in my life.

The issues of security and significance are absolutely settled. There is no confusion when it comes to what I'm doing here. Jesus is alive, guiding me day to day. He is my Savior and my Lord.

**3. Who is Jesus Christ to you?** He asked his disciples, **Mt. 16:15 - Who do you say that I am?** We each need to answer that same question. In fact, it is...

*The most important question you will ever answer.*

You know why? Because this is the question you'll be asked at the end. This is *the entrance exam for heaven.*

**In 14:6** Jesus said he is the only way to get to the Father.

Who do you say he is? The stakes are high. **John 8:24 - if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins.** Your eternity hinges on this. If you don't believe that Jesus is the *I AM*, infinite and perfect, then his death can't cover for your sins. If you don't accept him as Savior and trust him to bear your sins, then you're going to take them all to the grave and you are on your own before God the Father. You are going to approach God in one of two ways, *with sin, or with Christ!*

God came here. He *invaded* the world to set you free. He became flesh and came to us. There are two ways in which we can respond. We either reject him or receive him.

**John 1:11,12 He came to that which was his own** (he invaded his creation; he came to his people), **but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.** Both the choice and the consequences are yours. Will you reject Jesus as Savior or receive him?

Every week I invite you to respond by coming up at the conclusion of the service for prayer. We will have our prayer team members up here and you can come make peace with God through Jesus Christ. Make today the day you finally say, *He is my Savior, he is my Lord!*

**Rom 10:9 - If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**

*God, I admit that I'm a sinner and separated from you. I need help and I need forgiveness. I accept that Jesus died for me, paid*

*for my sins and rose again. I'm ready to turn from my sin and follow Jesus Christ as my Lord. Please guide me in this brand new life of faith.*

### **From Website link to beliefs:**

*Jesus Christ is the eternal second Person of the Trinity who was united forever with a true human nature by a miraculous conception and virgin birth. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and voluntarily atoned for the sins of all by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died. He ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, where He, the only Mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for His own. He shall come again to earth, personally and visibly, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.*

### **More Meat (Unused ideas)**

**Heb 1:1-3 - He is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being.**

Jesus was not only divine, but also demonstrated his human nature:

- Thirst: John 4:7
- Hunger: Matt 21:18.
- Weariness: John 4:6 - Jesus, tired as He was from the journey, sat down by the well. Matt. 8:24 - Had to sleep on a boat during a wild storm.
- Anguish: Mt 26:37,38 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and He began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then He said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." Then He prayed. Concerning that night

we read in Heb. 5:7 - During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears...

- Anger: Mark 3:5 mentions anger. John 2:15 shows it in action - And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple...He poured out the coins of the money changers, and overturned their tables... Mk 10:14 - Indignant that people kept children from coming to him.
- Compassion: Mt 9:36 - When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Lk 19:41 - When He approached, He saw the city and wept over it
- Hurt? There was a custom to release one prisoner at the time of the Passover. The Jewish leaders had persuaded the crowd to ask for a notorious insurrectionist. The Roman ruler Pilate asked, "Should I release the king of the Jews?" No, Barabbas. And what shall I do with Jesus? Crucify Him! How would He feel? Forsaken, rejected, abandoned.
- Tempted: Heb 4:15. Tempted in what ways? Luke 4. Heb. 2:18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

An angel could not be the mediator. Heb. 7:24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Heb. 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Heb. 7:26 Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Heb. 7:27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

- His sacrifice was not a repetitive ritual, but once and for all. As the final and perfect High priest, He brought the sacrifice, His own life.

Heb. 9:11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

Heb. 9:12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. -

As our representative, He died in our place, securing our salvation.

Heb. 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil –

Heb. 2:17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

He didn't just suffer to relate to us, He suffered in our place, taking our sin upon Himself as our substitute. Isa

53:5 - But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by His wounds we are healed.

What are we told that we can do? Heb. 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. You can rely on Him. His sacrifice was accepted. The proof is the res. You don't have to wonder. He is faithful. He is our advocate.

Heb. 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Material on Christ's humiliation from Phil 2:

6 Who, being in very nature God, In his pretemporal, preincarnate state, the Son shared not only the nature of God, but all of the glory. Even when he came here, he was still fully divine in essence and character, yet he did not exploit the privileges of being God. The Bible makes quite a point of the deity of Christ. John 1:1 - the word was God; Col 1:15 - image of the invisible God; Heb 1:1-3 - the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being. When Jesus explained his equality with God, the religious leaders were infuriated (John 5:18 they sought to put him to death because he was making himself equal with God. John 10:33 - We want you executed... for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God).

6b did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, He had no need to grasp at divine equality because he already possessed it. Had equal status with God but let go of the accompanying advantages. Didn't cling to divine rights. *How different with us!* Entitlement mentality: people often excuse their selfishness by claiming supposed rights. They think they can cheat on a test or their taxes or their mate. *I deserve this.* The only person who could legitimately assert his rights waived them. This is the attitude of Christ.

7 but made himself nothing, lit = emptied himself. Laid aside his glory. He divested himself of his former majesty. He gave up the independent use of his divine attributes, not of his equality with God, but his existence in a manner equal with God. *Sill a citizen of US when in Mexico, but give up certain rights and privileges.*

taking the very nature of a servant, He relinquished his status to take on a subservient role to the Father. His life here was in complete subjection. Just because one person is in a position of submission to another, that doesn't mean they're not equals in worth, value, and significance.

being made in human likeness. He was truly human. Like us in every way yet without sin (Heb 4:15). Felt lonely, got tired, wept. He can relate.

Why would he do such a thing? Incredible love was shown in the incarnation. God became one of us to lead us to life but we rejected and killed him.

When Jesus came down, he came way down to be like us. Phil 2:7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. Not 50/50. 100%/100%. He added human nature to his divine nature. If Jesus was only God and not also man, he could not have died for the sins of man. As a man, he represents us and relates to us. If he was only man and not God then he would not have been perfect and his death wouldn't have had infinite value to pay for the sins of humanity. He would have had to die for His own sin.

In a way that we'll never understand, the Father used the virgin birth as the way to visit us in real human nature but without inheriting a depraved, corrupted sinful nature. Jesus is the union in one Person of the eternal nature of God and a true human nature with its limitations and needs.

Jn 5:18 - For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Jn 5:23 - He said he deserved honor equal to the Father.

Jn 14:9 He said that to see him was to see God

Mt 28:19 - equated himself with the Father and Spirit.

Jesus is Phil 2:6 in very nature God;

Tit 2:13 - ...our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Friends shared what it means that Jesus is Savior and Lord:

*It means I'm not alone in this world. He's the living God.*

*He gives my life meaning. He's the reason I do everything.*

*He's the one I serve.*

Because Jesus is my savior:

I will choose to give grace to others.

I will choose to surrender my life (finances, relationships, job, ministry, children.....)

Because He is my Lord:

I will choose to serve Him wholeheartedly.

I will choose to make seeking Him, listening to Him, my number one priority.

*It doesn't take much faith for me to believe because I met him.*

*You can say this is a subjective experience, but it backs up the objective truth of God's Word. There are some things that are simply undeniable. And the presence of Jesus Christ alive in his followers is one of them.*