

## What Does it Mean to be a Disciple of Jesus Christ?

### A Disciple Knows Who Jesus Is

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#### Lesson Four

**Lesson Objective:** That students can show from Scripture that Jesus is God.

**Bible Passage:** Mt 16: 13-17

**Bible Truth:** Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the Living God

#### Before You Begin:

- ◆ paper and pencils for each student
- ◆ blackboard or large paper to write on
- ◆ chalk or markers

#### Opening:

Two truths and a lie. Give each student a small piece of paper and a pencil and ask them to write down two things about themselves (things they have done, places they have gone, likes or dislikes, etc.) that are true and one that is a lie. Then have each student say their name and read their statements out loud and let the others guess which one is the lie. Afterwards ask:

- *What is something you learned about someone that you wouldn't have expected.*
- *Which of the lies was the most convincing and why?*

*Just like we now know each other a little bit better, today we also hope to learn one very important truth about Jesus.*

Ask the students to raise their hands if they read their passages of Mark during the last week and then have several people tell something they learned through their readings.

## Interactive Learning

Tell students to turn their pieces of paper over and write down two true things they know about Jesus and one lie that people say about him. When they have finished writing, have each student read out loud what they have written. Draw a line down the middle of the blackboard or paper, write at the top of one column "truth" and at the top of the other "lies", then as they read their answers write the responses in the appropriate columns. You don't have to write every answer word for word but can generalize or summarize, as many of them will probably be repeated. Then say,

*We often take for granted that people believe what we do about who Jesus is: that he was born as a baby 2000 years ago -- a real, historical, human being -- and that he is also God, one of the three persons of the trinity. But there are people around us, maybe even people here today, who do not believe that. There is so much reliable historical evidence that a Jewish teacher named Jesus lived in Palestine that most people accept that he was really a man. But there are many people, who for different reasons, don't believe that the man Jesus was also God. If you are going to be a disciple of Jesus, dedicating your life to following him, you need to know the truth about him and you need to be able to defend that truth against people who attack it.*

## Bible Application

Have students turn to Mt. 16: 13-17. Tell them to follow along in their bibles and look for the truth and the lies that people were saying about Jesus while he was on earth, as you read the passage out loud.

- *What lies were people telling about Jesus? Or, who were they incorrectly saying that he was? [Write on the board under "lies", as they tell them to you, the names from v. 14]*
- *What kind of person did the people who gave these responses think Jesus was? [a good person; a prophet, in other words, someone who teaches what God says]*

*Although these answers show that the people respected Jesus as a teacher, they are not accurate. So Jesus asks his disciples, who have spent almost all day every day with him for years, what they think.*

- *Peter gave the "right answer" about who Jesus was. What was it? [write on the board under "truth": "the Christ, the Son of the Living God"]*

See if any of the students knows what the word "the Christ" means [is Greek for the Hebrew word "Messiah" which means "the anointed one"] and if anyone can,

have them explain what that idea meant to the Jews. If they don't know, explain it to them using the following questions and comments as a guide.

- *In the Old Testament which individuals were anointed? [those given a special job by God, especially the kings]*
- *After the kings David and Solomon, Israel divided into two, fell apart politically and then the people were taken into exile. During these difficult years what did God promise the people that he would send them? [a good king who, in the model of King David, would rule them well and defeat their enemies. The Jews called this person "the messiah" the one anointed by God to lead His people]*

*In order to understand the Gospels you have to understand that the Jewish people had been suffering under the rule of other countries for a long time and they were looking and waiting for this person sent by God to save them. So, when Peter called Jesus "the Christ" he was saying that he thought Jesus was the person sent by God to save them. But Peter doesn't stop with saying that Jesus is the Messiah. He adds that Jesus is "the Son of the Living God."*

*When we call someone a "son" or "daughter" we are focusing on his or her relationship with another person. In the Old Testament both Israel as a people and the kings were called "sons of God," emphasizing the special and unique relationship that they had with God. In calling Jesus "the Son of the Living God" Peter is emphasizing the close and unique relationship that Jesus had with God. Let's look at some of the things Peter had experienced during his time with Jesus that led him to believe that Jesus was sent from God and had a special, intimate relationship with Him*

## Commitment

Write the following sets of verses on a chalkboard or large piece of paper and then divide the students into six groups and assign one set of verses to each group. (If you have a very large group create enough groups so that each one has four people or fewer and assign the same verses to more than one group.) Tell the students to study the verses for clues that show us that Jesus claimed to be God and/or demonstrated characteristics of God.

Explain that first they should read the Old Testament verses and note how God describes himself or is described—either in terms of who He is or what He does. Then they should read the verses from the New Testament, looking for how Jesus demonstrates or claims that characteristic. Make sure that you have read the verses beforehand as well as the explanations written below so that you can help any group that might be confused by their verses.

1) Exodus 3: 13-15; Jn 8:54-59

[Jesus calls himself the same thing, "I am" in John 8:58, as God does when he tells Moses his name. By using this phrase Jesus was claiming to be God and we see that the Jewish religious leaders understood that because they immediately tried to stone him, which is the punishment prescribed in the Jewish law for blasphemy. Other examples of Jesus claiming to be "I AM" can be found in Jn. 6: 35, 8:12; 10: 9, 11; 11:25, 14:6, 15:5]

## **2) Ex 20:4,5; Mt 4: 10; Mt 15: 28-33**

[We know from the Ten Commandments and from Jesus own words that the only person who should be worshiped is God. But Jesus accepts worship from people, in this case his disciples. Another example of Jesus accepting worship is in John 9: 35-39.]

## **3) Isaiah 43: 25; Luke 5: 18-25**

[As the Pharisees note, only God can forgive sins. A person can forgive someone who sins against them personally, but the paralytic had not sinned against Jesus so Jesus couldn't have forgiven his sins unless he were God]

## **4) John 5: 16- 18; Jn. 10: 30-33**

[Jesus himself claimed to be God by making himself equal with God and by saying that he was one with God.]

## **5) Deut. 31:8; Mt 28: 20b**

[Both God the Father and Jesus promised to always be with their followers. Omnipresence is a quality unique to God.]

## **6) Ps. 95: 5; Ps. 89:9; Mark 4: 37-41**

[The Bible is clear that God controls and subdues the sea. By both walking on the waters and by causing them to subside, Jesus reveals himself to be God.]

When all of the groups have finished, come together as a large group again and have each group explain how their verses point towards the deity of Christ. If they leave out any of the ideas included in the notes above fill in the missing information. Tell the students that there are many other truths in the Bible which highlight the fact that Jesus was God as well as man, for example the fact that he rose from the dead, that he performed many miracles, and also that he lived a perfectly sinless life. Explain that the most concise statement of the deity of Christ is John 1: 1, "In the beginning the Word was with God and the Word was God." But because the Jehovah's Witnesses have changed that verse in their Bible to read, "was a God" instead of "was God" it is important for them to know other passages that show that Jesus both claimed to be God and is God. Tell the students that they might want to copy down these sets of verses so that in the future if they ever need to be able to defend what they believe they have them handy.

## Closing

[For the closing create a "logic flow chart" by writing on the board the options and then connecting by an arrow each option with its logical conclusion.]

***Thinking about the deity of Christ, there are only a few logical options. 1) Jesus didn't say he was God or 2) Jesus did say he was God. We've just seen that Jesus did say that he was God, so we have three more options: 1) Jesus lied, 2) Jesus was crazy, and 3) Jesus was God. No one, not even people who don't believe that Jesus was God, thinks that he was a liar. Even Muslims and Jehovah's Witnesses believe that he was a great moral teacher and a great moral teacher does not lie.***

***There are people in the world alive right now who think that they are God. You find most of them in insane asylums. If they are not clinically insane, but are leading a religious cult, it is not too difficult to look at their lives and see that they are imbalanced or megalomaniacs. But Jesus was by all accounts an emotionally healthy person and very humble. The only other alternative is that Jesus told the truth and that he is God.***

**In closing focus on praising Jesus as God, either by singing a song focused on Jesus, by praising him in prayer, or by reading in unison Colossians 1: 15-20.**



