

# Prayer Updates

## HOSPITALIZATIONS & SURGERIES THIS PAST WEEK

Carl Cutshaw—critical condition after a fall  
Chris Sanborn—liver, kidney & appendix infections, surgery 4/26  
Eugene Warren—gallstones, testing  
Janet Godfrey—wrist surgery, 5/8  
Jay Webb—testing, unable to eat  
John Bowen—UCSF stomach cancer surgery, 5/2, weeks of recovery  
Mary Masters—UCLA Med Center, testing for her kidneys  
Morgan Stevens—seizures, RSD  
Robert Walters—RCU (restorative care)  
Shirley Demaison—pneumonia  
Virginia Fair—RCU (restorative care)

## RECENT HOSPITALIZATIONS & SURGERIES:

Nancy Kronander, Alex Tabag, Andrew Carlton, MariAnn Wilson

## HOME WITH THE LORD

Please remember James “Fred” Taylor and family in the recent loss of his mother, Mildred Taylor. A service is planned for Friday, May 12 at 3:30 in the Auditorium.

One of TLC’s first missionaries, Bob Ediger (Missionary Aviation Fellowship pilot to Africa), is now present with the Lord. His wife, Yvonne, preceded him last October. Bob is the brother of Betty McCorkle; Mac & Betty now reside in Vancouver, WA.

## Do you or someone you know need a STEPHEN MINISTER?

Stephen Ministers are now available to encourage individuals who have experienced a crisis or loss in their lives. If you know someone who could benefit from this ministry, please call our Pastor of Care, Gary Williams (465-3395). Stephen Ministers receive 50 hours of training.

## We want to provide pastoral support...

Please call 465-3395 when someone is hospitalized, scheduled for surgery, becomes a shut-in, or in special need. Prayer support is available through our pastors and numerous prayer groups — call 689-9400. Please pick up a Prayer Update at the Information Desk or Welcome Center.

# Decoding the TRUTH

## “Who Is Jesus?”

Message by René Schlaepfer, May 6 & 7, 2006

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Matthew 16:13-15

Books like The Da Vinci Code and other best-sellers assert that Jesus never claimed to be divine. What’s fact and what’s fiction?

## Q: Is it true that Jesus never claimed to be God?

**CLAIM** “Constantine upgraded Jesus’ status almost four centuries after Jesus’ death... he commissioned ...a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ’s human traits and embellished those gospels that made him godlike.” (p. 234)

**FACT** “This is extraordinary revisionist history... The idea that Constantine at the Council of Nicea made Jesus into a deity from a mere mortal prophet is ridiculous. The church had been declaring Jesus’ deity for more than 250 years.”  
– Dr. Mark Strauss, professor and best-selling author

**FACT** “This view is wrong on all key points: Christians before Nicea already did accept him as divine; the Gospels of the New Testament portray him as human as much as they portray him as divine; Constantine had in fact nothing to do with the New Testament canon, and the other gospels weren’t suppressed by Constantine. This claim is completely wrong.” – Bart Ehrman, Chairman, Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## Jesus asserted \_\_\_\_\_ with God

John 5:18 ...He was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

John 10:30 “I and the Father are one.”

John 14:9 “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”

John 8:58 “...Before Abraham was born, I am!”

## Jesus assumed \_\_\_\_\_ of God

Mark 2:5-7 Jesus said, “Son, your sins are forgiven” ...The Jewish scribes who heard him were incensed, “Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

## Jesus accepted \_\_\_\_\_ as God

John 20:28 “My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' ...A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher... Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. ...Let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." – C. S. Lewis, "Mere Christianity," p. 52

**Q: What did early Christians believe?**

**CLAIM** *Until that moment in history (325 A.D.), Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet . . . a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless... a mortal. Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicea." "Hold on. You're saying that Jesus' divinity was the result of a vote?" "A relatively close vote at that . . . Constantine turned Jesus into a deity." (p. 233)*

**FACT** This was not a council that met to decide whether or not Jesus was divine; quite the contrary: everyone at the Council –and in fact just about every Christian everywhere – already agreed that Jesus was divine. And there was certainly no vote... on Jesus' divinity."  
– Bart Ehrman, Chairman, Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**FACT** "Only two out of over 300 bishops failed to sign the creed. Not exactly a cliffhanger." –John Ortberg

**FACTS**

**All the earliest Christian texts show a belief in Christ's divinity:**

1 Corinthians 8:6 "There is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live."

Colossians 2:9 "For in Christ all the fullness of God lives in bodily form."

2 Peter 1:1 "...our God and Savior Jesus Christ..."

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Ignatius (A.D. 105) "In Christ, God Himself was manifest in human form."

Clement (A.D. 150) "It is fitting that you should think of Jesus Christ as of God."

Irenaeus (A.D. 180) "Nevertheless, what cannot be said of anyone else who ever lived, can be said of him, that he is himself in his own right God and Lord."

Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 190) "He alone is both God and man."

Origen (A.D. 225) "No one should be offended that the Savior is also God."

**The classic Christian belief:**

**Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_% God and \_\_\_\_\_% man**

**Q: Is it true that the gnostic gospels portray Jesus as more human?**

**CLAIM** "[Constantine] literally stole Jesus from His original followers, hijacking His human message, shrouding it in an impenetrable cloak of divinity." p. 233

**FACT** "...the Gospels that did not get included in the NT portray him as divine more than they portray him as human..." – Bart Ehrman

**Q: What difference does this make?**

If Jesus is 100% God and 100% man:

• I know God \_\_\_\_\_ me

Jesus felt...

...tears (John 11:35) ...love (John 11:5; 19:26-27)

...sorrow (Matthew 26:38) ...temptation (Mark 1:13)

...amazement (Matthew 8:10) ...anger (Mark 3:5)

• I know God \_\_\_\_\_ me

• I know God \_\_\_\_\_ me

**Q: Who do I say Jesus is?**

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matthew 16:15-16

*We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.*

*We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.*

*Through him all things were made.*

*For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.*

— from **The Nicene Creed**

**Resources**

Philip Jenkins, *Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way*

Distinguished Professor of History at Penn State, Jenkins convincingly debunks the claim that the Gnostic gospel discoveries undermine the historical validity of the New Testament

Lee Strobel and Garry Poole, *Exploring the Da Vinci Code*

N. T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is*

Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey, Wright is a very well-respected authority on the historical Jesus. A must-read!

# Daily Meditations

Brief daily devotions based on this weekend's message

*This week's memory verse:*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1*

## Monday

Which points jumped out at you in this weekend's message?

Read back over the list of verses in your notes demonstrating Christ's claims to deity and the apostolic belief in Christ as divine. What difference do these verses make in your life?

Read John 1:1-18. I've always thought this was a pretty mind-blowing passage! What do these verses help explain about the nature of Jesus?

Why did Jesus come into the world, according to these verses?

Why do you suppose there have always been people eager to deny that Christ claimed to be divine?

*Meditate on this passage and thank God for making the journey — not just to visit — but to save!*

## Tuesday

Read John 10:22-39. This is a fascinating passage, clearly showing both Christ's claims to deity and typical responses to that claim. First, in verse 24, the people say Jesus is not being clear enough. Then when it is plain to them that Jesus is claiming to be God, what do they decide to do (verses 33)?

Even today some say Jesus was vague, or that he was a brilliant man with a Messiah complex. How would you try to persuade someone that Jesus claimed to be God?

*Thank God today that Jesus came to earth. Meditate on the fact that you are in His hands and He will never let you go!*

## Wednesday

Read John 14:1-11; John 20:24-31. Does Thomas' journey of faith reflect your own in any way? How?

What things did Thomas find hard to believe?

How did he find faith?

## Wednesday (continued)

How can people with similar questions find faith today?

For your interest, early Christian tradition holds that Thomas became one of the most enthused of the early disciples, traveling as far as India to spread the gospel.

*Thank God that He gives reasons for faith. Ask Him to increase your faith! Review and pray through the verses in last weekend's message, making them into a prayer of thanksgiving and adoration.*

## Thursday

Read Hebrews 4:15. How does it make a difference to know the truth of this verse?

Look up some of the references in the weekend notes showing Christ's humanity:

Jesus felt...

...tears (John 11:35)

...sorrow (Matt. 26:38)

...amazement (Matt. 8:10)

...love (John 11:5; 19:26-27)

...temptation (Mark 1:13)

...anger (Mark 3:5)

*Thank Him today that He knows what life is like— because He's been here! Bring to Him an issue, temptation, or anxiety that has been troubling you, knowing that He understands.*

## Friday

Read Philippians 2:5-11. How do these verses help explain the nature of Jesus as God and man?

Paul says in verse 5 that our attitudes should also be the same as that of Christ Jesus when he left heaven and became human. In what way?

How can you do this today? This week?

*Thank Jesus that He was willing to do all this for you! Ask God to show you ways you can have the same attitude.*

## Saturday

*Please review devotions you may have missed, and pray for the weekend services. Thank you!*