

How Do You View Jesus?

Immanuel, which means "God with us" (Matthew 1:23), who lived on this earth as a man for only about 33 years, seems to be viewed differently at different times of the year. There is little information about his life from birth until reaching the age of service, defined as *"thirty years and upward, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tent of meeting"* (Numbers 4:3). However, Jesus identified Himself as the "Self-Existent One" by declaring, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am"* (John 8:58). He has existed from eternity before creation, through time, and into an eternal future. He was, is, and always will be a spirit being. Being confined to a physical body for about 33 years does not change His eternal existence. However, our view of Jesus usually conforms to those times when He is described in a physical body interacting with people. Error creeps into faith when some concentrate on a specific age or time.

At the end of each year, pictures of the Baby Jesus abound. People have created many ways to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. Many stories fictionalize the events of the 41 days from birth to the firstborn son's redemption (Luke 2:22-24). Since Joseph and Mary were faithful Hebrews and kept the ordinances of the law, Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day of His life (Leviticus 12:3). Mary would isolate herself for the time specified (Leviticus 12:1-4). Because all firstborn males belong to God, the parents who would raise the child would pay the price and make the offering to redeem the child back from the Lord (Numbers 18:15-16). The redemption occurred on the child's 41st day.

Seeing Imanuel as a baby, being dependent on His parents for all of His care, makes Him seem more controllable. It separates the Son of Mary from the Son of God, who possesses all authority (Matthew 28:18). The Actions of Herod and the Wise men from the East make a more colorful picture than the day-to-day caring for a baby and later, a toddler. But the creator of Adam, the one who made the full-grown first man, learned to control the physical body, from childhood through manhood.

Many people like to view Jesus as a 12-year-old boy, able to discuss the Law of Moses with the learned men at the Temple, (Luke 2:46-47). This view allows those that deny the deity of Jesus to explain how He learned everything from Mary. Pointing to His knowledge and the "homeschooling" given to Hebrew children, they conclude that Jesus learned like other children but was much brighter than the others. They use this view, combined with the "water into wine" miracle (John 2:1-11), to falsely conclude that Mary was the guiding force behind Jesus. The "Hail Mary Mother of Jesus" prayer and the song "Ave Maria" by Franz Schubert stem from this false conclusion.

Most of the world population, including those worshiping false gods and philosophies, view Jesus as "A good man." Educated scholars spend vast fortunes and time trying to explain His miracles by natural means. Some have earned Ph.D. degrees by thinking up natural ways to describe the miracles of healings, feeding thousands, and even walking on water. They view Jesus as nothing more than an illusionist like the modern magicians. The televised media produces documentaries designed to convince the world that Jesus was just a human being like the rest of us. Paul warns about them as he wrote, *"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ"* (Colossians 2:8).

Many consider Him a dead man based on the idea that Jesus was just a human and could not survive the treatment He received. To explain the empty tomb, they say that He was not really dead. Close to death from the beatings, but not beyond being revived as an accident victim whose heart stops and is restored today. They deny the resurrection because they do not believe in heaven or hell. Instead, they promote the false teaching of reincarnation and karma. They have even been able to get the word karma into everyday use while not emphasizing a reincarnated life.

The correct image of Jesus is that of the glorified King of Kings. John describes his first vision of the risen Lord this way, *"Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash"* (Revelation 1:12-13). The lampstands, holding forth the light of the gospel to the world, are the local assembly of saints. Walking among them is the Good Shepherd, leading them in the duties. We read about the praises given to Him by all the hosts of heaven. *"Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation"* (Revelation 5:9).

Which view do you have?