

Jesus, really?

Isaiah 42:1-9

Introduction

Henry sat on the blue padded pew having a crisis of faith as he listened to the pastor expound the baptism of the Jesus. Henry knew all too well the story of John the Baptist baptizing Jesus in the Jordan. He had heard it countless times before. Somehow this question never occurred to him. When the pastor read the passage aloud for the congregation to follow along with, it struck Henry out of nowhere. Now, it was suffocating him as he squirmed in the blue cushiony pew.

He looked down at his tattered King James Bible to reread the verse that dealt the severe blow. He underlined verse seventeen in the third chapter of Matthew's gospel as he read it again to himself. "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then the relentless question bombarded his mind causing him to nervously shift in the pew. He glanced around at the congregation dressed in their Sunday's best and wondered was he the only one that ever raise the question, *how do I know that this statement is true?*

Have you ever had the same thought as Henry? How do we know that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God? Of course, there will always be an element of faith to accepting the gospel claims of the deity of Christ. However, the Christian doctrine is not contrary to reasonable logic. If you have experienced doubts in the past, you are not alone. Clive Stapleton Lewis had his fair share of doubts too. However, his reasoning of the Christian faith brought him to the threshold of acceptance and faith allowed him to crossover into belief. He writes in *Mere Christianity*,

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. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.¹

We have a choice. Jesus was who he said he was or he was not. However, I would advise choosing wisely. By examining a prophecy in Isaiah 42:1-9 – although there are much more to considered – one can witness that Jesus fit the characteristics of the long prophesied divine Servant.

¹ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: MacMillan Pub. Co., 1952).

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. Isaiah 42:1

The prophet Isaiah arrests the audience's attention by declaring, "Behold my servant...mine elect..." In other words, there is one that is coming that needs to be considered or looked upon. This fact was nothing new for the Jewish people had a long tradition of speaking about a coming redeemer. I would like to journey through only a few different prophecies concerning this coming Servant of God – to use Isaiah's terms – and see how Jesus of Nazareth measures up.

First, after the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, God states, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and *her seed*; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise *his heel* (Genesis 3:15 – emphasis added). This verse is known as the *protoevangelium* or the first time the gospel is mentioned.² Notice the phrases, "her seed" and "his heel." Many biblical scholars argue that this is about the virgin birth (Isa 7:17; Mat 1:18-25; Luk 1:26-38). Also, many argue that the bruising of "his heel" could be significant because crucifixion often bruised the heel of its victim. Sound familiar? There is more!

Secondly, Moses later instructs the children of Israel before his death by saying, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him (Deuteronomy 18:18). I mention this aspect because this is the dividing line between the three major Abrahamic religions in the world: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Judaism is still waiting for the arrival of this person. Islam – although it recognizes Jesus as a prophet – argues Muhammad is the "seal of the prophets." Christianity not only believes Jesus is a prophet but more. He is God's only begotten Son!

Furthermore, there is a timeline for the appearance of this individual! Have you ever heard of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel? Daniel prophesied,

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined (Daniel 9:24-26).

² Matt Slick, "Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry," CARM Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry, , accessed January 07, 2017, <https://carm.org/dictionary-protoevangelium>.

Why is this significant? It reveals when the Messiah should appear! It would be 483 years (490-7), and the Messiah would appear. Artaxerxes decree to rebuild Jerusalem was issued in 457 B.C. Therefore, if a person calculated it 483 years from that date would land in A.D. 27. That was the year John the Baptist baptized Jesus! On a side note, this may be the way the Magi of East knew to be looking for the Star of Bethlehem (Mat 2:1-12).

He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Isaiah 42:2-4

Now that we see Christ fits the prophetic timetable for the Messiah let us look closer the demeanor of Isaiah's Servant. The Servant of God would not be a showboat but rather meek, humble, and kind. The gospels record these characteristics of Christ:

The Gospel according to Matthew records,

Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; (And charged them that they should not make him known: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust (Matthew 12:14-21).

Mark's Gospel states writes,

And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. *And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.* But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter (Mark 1:40-45 – emphasis added).

It is easy to see from these passages Jesus fits the characteristics of Christ.

Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Isaiah 42:5-9

First, in verse 5, God goes to great lengths to clarify who is speaking. He goes on to state the call on the Servant (v. 6). He mentions something significant. He says, "...and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." Does this sound familiar? It should! The author of Matthew records Jesus stating similar words. Matthew writes,

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins* (Matthew 26:26-28 – emphasis added).

Isaiah's Servant was to bring about the New Covenant. This is mentioned in verse 9.

Secondly, in verse 7, this Servant is to bring light and liberation. Sound familiar, again? When John the Baptist was discouraged in prison, Jesus referred to this prophecy. Luke the Evangelist writes,

And John calling *unto him* two of his disciples sent *them* to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? And in that same hour he cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many *that were* blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me. Luke 7:19-23 (KJV)

Well, that is all great but how does this prove Jesus was the Son of God? Peter Stoner reveals how. Stoner figured that the odds of one man fulfilling 48 of these prophecies were 1 in 10 to the 157th power.³

Furthermore, Isaiah directly deals with the issue of divinity in the passage in verse 8. God will not share his glory when anyone. However, we know the gospels claimed Jesus was

³ "The Odds of Jesus Fulfilling Just 48 of 300 Messianic Prophecies," Bible Believers Fellowship, July 22, 2013, , accessed January 07, 2017, <http://bbfohio.com/the-odds-of-jesus-fulfilling-just-48-of-300-messianic-prophecies/>.

glorified and even worshiped. The Old Testament does give credence to the Trinity. Daniel has a vision of God and states, “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him (Daniel 7:13).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Jesus is the Son of God! Faith must accept it, but it is not without facts. We can see by examining Isaiah 42:1-9, that Jesus fit the characteristics of the long prophesied divine Servant. We can agree with the author Hebrews when they write,

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (Hebrews 1:1-3).

What will you do with this Jesus? It's the most important question of all.

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