

THE LIFE OF JESUS

Jesus Christ is a very special person. He is the only Son of God. But he was born into a very poor and humble family. His stepfather, Joseph, was a carpenter in a little village. As Jesus grew up he learned to be a carpenter and everybody thought that he would work like Joseph. His family recognised that Jesus was different. He spent a lot of time reading and talking about the Bible, the Word of God. He was never dishonest or hurtful or unkind. He grew up in this way.

Luke 2:52

'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.'

By the time Jesus was 12 years old he had decided to dedicate his life to God. He told his parents of this decision. His brothers and sisters saw that Jesus was different from them and his half brother, James, wrote these words about him.

James 3:13

'But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.'

This is the wisdom mentioned in the other Bible quotation we have looked at in Luke chapter 2. James tells us about the boy who grew up in the same home as he did. He tells us that the character of Jesus was different to ours. Jesus shows us the wisdom which comes from God. His character was like that of his father, God himself. Jesus showed men and women what God was like by the way he lived.

When Jesus was 30 years old he left home. For the next three and a half years he travelled through Israel. He talked to men and women about God and the salvation God had promised them. He told them that he was sent to save them. He asked them to believe him. Those who believed and followed him were called disciples.

From the disciples he chose twelve men to be with him and to help him with his work. These men were called apostles. He sent them out to tell people about his message of salvation, which is called 'the Gospel'. This is a word which simply means 'Good News'.

Jesus taught people in many ways. Sometimes he spoke to them words which were unlike the teaching of any other man.

Mark 1:21-22

'They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.'

God gave Jesus the power of the Holy Spirit to help him in his work. God had given it to other men before in small amounts to work for him. Jesus was the only man who was given unlimited power. He used it only to do those things which pleased God.

John 5:19-21

'Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.

For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.'

Jesus did many wonderful things with the Holy Spirit power. The Bible calls them miracles. Sometimes Jesus even raised people from the dead and gave them life again.

Luke 5:18-25

'Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus.

When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?"

Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." He said to the paralysed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God.'

The teaching and healing of Jesus was to show that he had the power and authority from God to forgive sins. How sad it was that Israel would not listen to him. They did not love him as their saviour. They were not interested in his teaching. They only wanted him to make life easy for them by miracles, which fed them or cured their disease.

Jesus had a message for these people.

John 6:26

'Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

At other times Jesus taught people by parables. These are stories with hidden meanings. They are about the kingdom of God and how we must prepare ourselves for it. Here is one parable Jesus taught.

Matthew 13:45-46

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.

When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.'

From this parable Jesus wanted people to understand that the kingdom of God is more important than anything else in life. When we find out about it, we have to put it first. It is the most precious thing we can have.

Jesus used all his strength and energy in preaching the Gospel. When he died, he was still a young man, but he looked much older. This was because of all the hard work he had done for God. He was able to say to God when he talked to him in a prayer;

John 17:4

'I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.'

Jesus had told men and women everything about God. He taught them about the kingdom of God, which will come on the earth. They were not interested in his teaching and finally they killed him. We shall learn about his death in the next lesson.

Questions

- 1 How was Jesus different to other people?
- 2 Who were the apostles?
- 3 Why was Jesus given the power of the Holy Spirit?
- 4 What did Jesus do when he was 30 years old?
- 5 What are miracles?
- 6 What are parables?