

JESUS MAKES FATHER PLEASERS

- A. Introduction: Jesus said that the years leading up to His return will be marked by religious deception — primarily false christs and false prophets. Matt 24:4-5; 11; 23-24
1. No one with any knowledge of the evidence in the historical record (even nonbelievers) can deny that Jesus actually lived on this planet. The debate is over who He is, what He did, and what He taught.
 - a. Because Bible reading and teaching is at an all time low among many Christians, they are vulnerable to embracing inaccurate and false ideas about Jesus—both His person and His work.
 - b. We're taking time to look at the genuine Jesus (as He is revealed in the Bible) so that we're equipped to recognize counterfeit christs and false prophets who teach false messages in Christ's name.
 2. There are a number of contributing factors in the confusion over who Jesus is and why He came to earth. Misinformation about the nature of God is a primary factor. We've previously made these points.
 - a. The Bible reveals that God is One God (One Being) Who simultaneously manifests as three distinct (but not separate) Persons—the Father, the Son or the Word, and the Holy Spirit.
 1. These three persons co-inhere or share one Divine Nature. God is not one God who manifests three ways, sometimes as the Father, sometimes as the Son, and sometimes as the Holy Spirit. You can't have one without the other. The Father is all God, as is Son and the Holy Spirit.
 2. All efforts to explain the nature of God fall short because it is beyond our comprehension. We simply accept the mystery of the Godhead (the Divine Nature) and rejoice in His awesomeness.
 - b. Two thousand years ago, the Word entered space and time and, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, became fully man without ceasing to be fully God. He took the name Jesus (which means Savior) because He came to save us from our sins. Matt 1:22-23; John 1:14
 1. While on earth, although Jesus did not cease to be God, He did not live as God. He veiled His Deity and voluntarily limited Himself. Jesus lived as a man in dependence on God as His Father. Phil 2:5-8; Acts 10:38; John 5:19; John 14:9-10; etc.
 2. When the Word incarnated, He humbled Himself and took a role of submission to the Father as part of the implementation of the plan of redemption. John 14:28; John 10:29; etc.
 3. God is both transcendent (separate from or beyond) and imminent (close at hand). Although there is much about Him that is incomprehensible to our minds, Almighty God is knowable. And, He has chosen to reveal Himself to us so that we can know Him. Jer 9:23-24
 - a. God has progressively revealed Himself to mankind through His interaction with human beings (as recorded in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, we see the full revelation of God to man in Jesus. Jesus is the visible manifestation of the Invisible God. John 1:18; Heb 1:1-3; Col 1:15
 - b. Jesus came to earth, not only to die for sin, but to reveal a previously veiled aspect of God's character and plan. God is a Father who wants sons and daughters. Eph 1:4-5
 1. The night before Jesus went to the Cross, He prayed to the Father. In His prayer, Jesus said: I have declared your Name to the people you have given Me. John 17:6
 - A. First century Jews knew God by the name Jehovah along with all the other names given in the Old Testament. But Jesus gave them a new name for God: Father.
 - B. Old Covenant men and women did not refer to God as their Father. That title belonged to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. John 6:31; John 8:73; Luke 16:24; etc.
 2. God was the Father of Israel in general as their Creator, Deliverer, and Covenant Maker (Ex 4:22-23). But they had no concept of an individual Father-son relationship between God and man. Remember, when Jesus called God His Father, the Pharisees were outraged. They said it was blasphemy for a man to speak of God in such terms (John 5:17-18; John 10:30-33).
 3. Jesus came to earth to reveal this aspect of God's character and then make it possible for men and women to become sons and daughters of God. Let's continue our discussion about Jesus' mission.

- B. It's increasingly common to hear people talk about the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. However, the idea that God is everyone's Father and that we are all His children and part of the same family is a false teaching. It is deception.
1. We are all one "family" in the sense that we're all descended from one man, Adam. We're brothers and sisters in the sense that we share a common humanity and are all members of the human race.
 - a. Acts 17:22-31—When Paul preached to idol worshippers in Athens, Greece he attempted to show them the unreasonableness of worshipping carved images made of gold, silver, and stone.
 1. He reminded them that: (God) hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth (v26, KJV). Blood is used figuratively for lineage. Nations means a race, a people. Paul cited several Grecian poets familiar to his audience (Aratus and Cleanthus) wrote that we are God's offspring (from a Greek word that means to cause to be).
 2. Paul's point was that since God created living beings (mankind), He too must be a living being. (lessons for another day). The point for us is that God is the Creator of all men and women.
 - A. John 8:44; Matt 13:358—However, Jesus made it clear that God is not everyone's Father. In a confrontation with the Pharisees He told them that the devil was their father. Jesus also spoke of children (sons) of the kingdom and children (sons) of the evil one.
 - B. I John 3:10—The apostle John, who was an eyewitness of Jesus and part of His inner circle (Peter, James, and John), made several references to children (or sons) of God and children (sons) of the devil as he declared that not everyone is of God.
 - b. When Adam, the first man, sinned, because he was the head of the human race, his disobedience affected the entire race resident in him. His sin produced a fundamental change in human nature. Men became sinners by nature. Rom 5:19
 1. This new nature quickly expressed itself when Adam's first born son, Cain, killed his brother, Abel, and then lied to God about it. Gen 4:1-9
 2. Eph 2:3—Through our first birth, all humans are born into a fallen race, a race of sinners. The word nature (*phusis*) means by natural production, lineal descent.
 - A. In I John 3:10 John used a Greek word for children (*teknon*, or sons) that gives prominence to the fact of birth—In this is apparent who are born-ones of God and the born-ones of the devil (Wuest). Man's problem is more than what he does. It's what he is by birth.
 - B. A holy God cannot have sinners as sons. Before we can become sons of God our sin must be dealt with and our nature must be changed.
 2. Eph 1:4-5—Before Almighty God formed the heavens and the earth, He planned to have a family of sons who are holy and blameless in His sight. Sin has disqualified humanity for this position of sonship.
 - a. A holy God cannot overlook the sins of men. Jesus took on a human nature in the womb of Mary so that He could die for our sins and open the way for God to rightly and justly (legally) transform sinners into sons.
 - b. Rom 8:30—And those whom He thus foreordained He also called; and those whom He called He also justified—acquitted, made righteous, putting them into right standing with Himself. And those whom He justified He also glorified—raising them to a heavenly dignity and condition [state of being]. (Amp)
 1. Justified is a legal term. Since we've been acquitted, God can now treat us as though we never sinned and make us His sons. Glorified refers to a process of transformation. God indwells us by His Spirit, makes us literal sons by giving us eternal life (new birth), and then changes us from sinners into sons like Jesus in His humanity (lots of lessons for other days).
 2. Here's the point for now. Sonship comes only through faith in Christ. God is Father only to those who put faith in Jesus and His sacrifice and have been justified and glorified. I John 5:1

- c. John 1:12—To those who believe on Jesus, He gives the power to become sons of God. Power, in the Greek is *exousia* which means privilege; honor, dignity, right. Those who accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord have, through His blood, a right to sonship, purchased for us through the Cross.
- 3. We could teach entire lessons on each point above. But for now, consider one thought in connection with our discussion of end time deception and false christs, false prophets, and false gospels.
 - a. II Tim 3:1-5—Paul noted that the final days of this present age will be perilous in part because of the behavior of people. Then he listed some of those behaviors. Note v5—They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. (NLT)
 - b. The Bible makes it clear that when Jesus returns, the world will be under the control of a world religion presided over by the ultimate false christ, a man commonly known as the Antichrist. Rev 13:1-18; Dan 8:23; etc.
 - 1. An apostate or false Christian church that will welcome this man is already developing. It is being hailed as more tolerant, inclusive, and less judgmental than traditional Christianity.
 - 2. The Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man fits right in and confirms Paul’s prediction: Since we’re all God’s children, it doesn’t matter what you believe or how you live as long as you’re sincere. We don’t need to change. We’re fine just the way God made us.
- 4. It’s increasingly common today to hear even those who profess to be Christians say that Jesus is not the only way to God. Many believe that, because God is a loving God, He would never allow someone to go to Hell just because they don’t believe in Jesus.
 - a. But Jesus Himself said that no one comes to the Father but by (through) Him (John 14:6). Jesus said the way that leads to eternal life is narrow and the way to destruction is broad (Matt 7:13-14). Jesus was most like alluding to the distinction between public and private ways or paths. In first century Israel public paths were 24 feet wide and private paths were 6 feet wide.
 - b. As the God-man, Jesus is the only One who can bring God and man together. God and man came together in Jesus demonstrating that God and man can in fact be brought together. I Pet 3:18
 - 1. Because God is the Father of His humanity, He did not partake of the fallen nature from Adam. Because Jesus lived a perfect life, He had no guilt of His own. As God, His value was such that He was qualified to pay for the sins of an entire race. Heb 4:15; I Pet 1:18-19
 - 2. Jesus is the only propitiation (satisfaction) for sin, making Him the only way to the Father. There is only one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus. I John 2:2; I Tim 2:5
- C. Jesus came to earth to declare that God is a Father and to make it possible for sinful men and women to become sons and daughters of God by paying for our sin.
 - 1. Jesus’ earth ministry in the three-plus years leading up to the crucifixion was a time of transition. He was dealing with Old Covenant men who were under the Law of Moses.
 - a. They were servants of God as opposed to sons who were born of God. No one was born of God before the Cross. Much of Jesus’ preaching was aimed at preparing them for what was to come.
 - b. The Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5,6,7) is one of the most famous passages in the Bible. It was delivered by Jesus to His apostles and a multitude of other people on a mountain (large hill) near the city of Capernaum, early in His ministry.
 - 1. Capernaum was located in Galilee on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, northeast of Nazareth. Capernaum became the headquarters for His ministry in Galilee. Matt 9:1
 - 2. His original disciples came from Galilee. Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew were from Capernaum (Mark 1:16-19; Matt 9:9). Jesus stayed in Peter’s home.
 - c. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus made some bold statements about men who are sons of God, along with statements about God Who is a Father to His sons. Up until that time, the term sons of God was only used for angels. Job 1:6-8; Job 38:7

2. As part of His teaching, Jesus introduced the idea that sons of God are supposed to live with the consciousness that we have a Father in Heaven who cares for His children and that we are supposed to live in a way that brings honor to Him and that accurately represents Him to the world around us.
 - a. Matt 5:16—Let your light so shine before men that they may see your moral excellence and your praiseworthy, noble and good deeds, and recognize and honor and praise and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Amp)
 1. Matt 5:44-45—But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven.(NLT)
 2. Matt 5:48—You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect [that is, grow into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity (Amp). (Perfect signifies having reached an end, perfect, complete—*Vine's Dictionary*.)
 - b. Jesus' audience did not know when He delivered the Sermon on the Mount that He was going to the Cross to die for their (our) sin so that they (we) could become sons of God through new birth.
 1. Nor did they know that God would indwell them by His Spirit and life, make them literal sons, and empower them to live as sons of God. He was preparing them to receive what was ahead.
 2. But, notice, that Jesus' early comments about God and His family were directed at their (our) responsibility toward God. Sons are supposed to bring glory and honor to God.
 3. Christians are vulnerable to accepting false christs and false gospels because, not only are Christians biblically illiterate, much of the popular preaching today is man centered, not God centered. This is contrary to what Jesus showed us and told us about the relationship between God and His sons.
 - a. In His humanity Jesus demonstrated the kind of sons God wants. Jesus is the pattern for the family. Rom 8:29; I John 2:6
 1. Jesus' attitude was: My will is to do the will of Him who sent me (John 6:38). My food (nourishment) is to do the will (pleasure) of Him who sent me (John 4:34, Amp). I always do what is pleasing to My Father (John 8:29).
 2. John 8:28—Jesus was a Father pleaser and came to make sons who please God by what they are (sons born of Him) and by what they do (live in a way that is pleasing to Him).
 - b. Matt 4:17—Jesus' first public word was: Repent. The word literally means to change the mind.
 1. It's used of turning from sin and implies a feeling of sorrow and regret. The idea is that a change of mind produces a change of purpose that results in changed life. Jesus died to turn us from living for self to living for God, for His honor and glory. II Cor 5:15
 2. This is the place of true and complete satisfaction because we are fulfilling the purpose for which we were created—to glorify God as we live in loving relationship with Him.
 - c. Eph 1:12—(We) [have been destined and appointed] to live for the praise of His glory! (Amp)
- D. Conclusion: We still have much to cover in this part of our series. As we close, consider this thought.
1. Jesus came to earth to die for our sins so that men and women can become sons of God. As the God-man (fully God, fully man), not only does Jesus show us what God is like, He shows us what sons of God are like and the kind of relationship the Father wants with His sons.
 2. God is a Father who loves and cares for His sons and Daughters. He desires sons and daughters who glorify and bring honor to their Father. Jesus came to earth, died and rose again to make this possible.
 3. Through Jesus and His sacrifice at the Cross, men can be made holy and righteous—like our Father. Through Jesus, men can become Father pleasers like Him. Lots more next week!