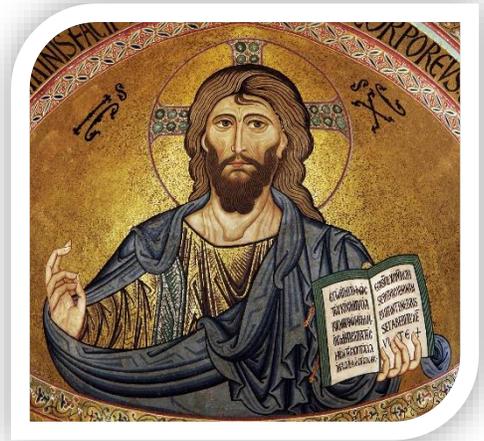


Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

September 13, 2016

Last Sunday we began what will be an intensive study of the Gospel of Mark, beginning with Mark's powerful first sentence, "***The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.***"

As we noted on Sunday, the climax of the first half of Mark is Peter's confession that "*You are the Messiah*" (8:29), and the climax of the second half of Mark is the centurion's confession that "*Surely this man was the Son of God!*" (15:39). Mark has told his readers in his very first sentence what it will take the characters in the story years to discover.



But it is not so simple as this. You may remember that Peter's confession came in response to Jesus' question, "*But what about you? Who do you say I am?*" One doesn't have to be around church or church folk for very long before discovering "the official answer" to that question; but the answer that matters is the one that becomes the settled conviction of our hearts and lives.

Kevin DeYoung writes a blog entitled "DeYoung, Restless and Reformed," and on June 10, 2009, he meandered through some typical responses to "Who Do You Say That I Am?":

The greatness of God is most clearly displayed in his Son. And the glory of the gospel is only made evident in his Son. That's why Jesus' question to his disciples is so important: "*Who do you say that I am?*"

The question is doubly crucial in our day, because [no one is as popular in the U.S. as Jesus]—and not every Jesus is the real Jesus

There's the **Republican Jesus**—who is against tax increases and activist judges, for family values and owning firearms.

There's **Democrat Jesus**—who is against Wall Street and Wal-Mart, for reducing our carbon footprint and printing money.

There's **Therapist Jesus**—who helps us cope with life's problems, heals our past, tells us how valuable we are and not to be so hard on ourselves.

There's **Starbucks Jesus**—who drinks fair trade coffee, loves spiritual conversations, drives a hybrid, and goes to film festivals.

There's **Open-minded Jesus**—who loves everyone all the time no matter what (except for people who are not as open-minded as you).

There's **Touchdown Jesus**—who helps athletes run faster and jump higher than non-Christians and determines the outcomes of Super Bowls.

There's **Martyr Jesus**—a good man who died a cruel death so we can feel sorry for him.

There's **Gentle Jesus**—who was meek and mild, with high cheek bones, flowing hair, and walks around barefoot, wearing a sash (while looking very German).

There's **Hippie Jesus**—who teaches everyone to give peace a chance, imagines a world without religion, and helps us remember that “all you need is love.”



There's **Yuppie Jesus**—who encourages us to reach our full potential, reach for the stars, and buy a boat.

There's **Spirituality Jesus**—who hates religion, churches, pastors, priests, and doctrine, and would rather have people out in nature, finding “the god within” while listening to ambiguously spiritual music.

There's **Platitude Jesus**—good for Christmas specials, greeting cards, and bad sermons, inspiring people to believe in themselves.

There's **Revolutionary Jesus**—who teaches us to rebel against the status quo, stick it to the man, and blame things on “the system.”

There's **Guru Jesus**—a wise, inspirational teacher who believes in you and helps you find your center.

There's **Boyfriend Jesus**—who wraps his arms around us as we sing about his intoxicating love in our secret place.

There's **Good Example Jesus**—who shows you how to help people, change the planet, and become a better you.

And then there's **Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God**. Not just another prophet. Not just another Rabbi. Not just another wonder-worker. He was the one they had been waiting for: The Son of David and Abraham's chosen seed; the one to deliver us from captivity; the goal of the Mosaic law; Yahweh in the flesh; the one to establish God's reign and rule; the one to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, freedom to the prisoners and proclaim Good News to the poor; the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world.



This Jesus was the Creator come to earth and the beginning of a New Creation. He embodied the covenant, fulfilled the commandments, and reversed the curse. This Jesus is the Christ that God spoke of to the Serpent; the Christ prefigured to Noah in the flood; the Christ promised to Abraham; the Christ prophesied through Balaam before the Moabites; the Christ guaranteed to Moses before he died; the Christ promised to David when he was king; the Christ revealed to Isaiah as a Suffering Servant; the Christ predicted through the Prophets and prepared for through John the Baptist.



This Christ is not a reflection of the current mood or the projection of our own desires. He is our Lord and God. He is the Father's Son, Savior of the world, and substitute for our sins—more loving, more holy, and more wonderfully terrifying than we ever thought possible.

This is He of whom Mark wrote, "*Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.*" **Who is He to you?**

Dave

You
don't want to
miss this.

