

# The Mind of Christ

## The Resurrection

### Part Two

#### INTRODUCTION:

- I. It has been said that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the very KEYSTONE in the ARCH of Christianity.
  - A. Anyone who is familiar with the architecture of a stone arch knows that the KEYSTONE, which is wedged into the topmost part of the arch, keeps the entire arch from collapsing.
    1. If you remove the keystone, the arch will simply fall.
    2. In the same manner, the BODILY RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ is the keystone in the arch of Christianity. If it is removed – if it could somehow be proved that Jesus was NOT bodily resurrected from the dead – Christianity collapses.
    3. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is, in fact, the ONE DOCTRINE that elevated CHRISTIANITY above all the PAGAN religions of the ancient world.
      - a. Not ONE of them made the claim that their founder was bodily resurrected from the dead and left behind an empty tomb as proof.

4. Therefore, every Christian knows the entire basis of our faith is the undisputable fact that Jesus Christ was bodily resurrected from the dead.
  - a. **1 Corinthians 15:12-14** – In fact, the apostle Paul simply put it this way: *Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty [your faith is also vain, useless, worthless].*
  
- II. But what makes the resurrection of Jesus even MORE incredible is the fact that our Lord PREDICTED His resurrection – and not in the form of some VAGUE, ABSTRACT or AMBIGUOUS prophecy, but one in which the Lord SPECIFICALLY said He would be resurrected EXACTLY THREE DAYS following His crucifixion.
  - A. Of all the gospel accounts, it's MATTHEW'S account that contains the most instances in which Jesus prophesied of His resurrection.
    1. **Matthew 12:40** – Speaking to the scribes and Pharisees who were asking for a sign to prove His deity, Jesus said: *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the*

*Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

2. **Matthew 16:21** – Following the events at Caesarea Philippi, Matthew says: *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*
3. **Matthew 17:22-23** – *Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, 23 and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.*
4. **Matthew 20:17-19** – *Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, 18 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, 19 and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."*
5. And three times in Matthew's account, the enemies of Jesus made reference to the Lord's claim in John chapter two: *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* (**John 2:19; Matthew 26:61; 27:40, 63**)

- a. Of course, John tells us Jesus wasn't speaking of the temple in Jerusalem: *But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said. (John 2:21-22)*

II. When we examine the claims Jesus made, there are two that stand out most, and two claims that served as the basis for the entire case brought against Jesus when He was brought before the Sanhedrin – those two claims are that He would be resurrected from the dead in three days, and that He was IN FACT the Son of God – the promised Messiah.

A. It can be argued that Jesus' PREDICTION of His death, and the facts surrounding the MANNER of His death are not all that significant.

1. Jesus was a hunted man, and He knew that the chief priests and elders of the people were looking for an opportunity to seize Jesus and bring Him to trial and put Him to death.

a. So, the mere fact that Jesus PREDICTED His death is not all THAT significant.

2. Furthermore, the way in which Jesus would be put to death was, for the most part, a settled matter – He knew He had to be put to death by the authority of Rome, which would involve crucifixion.
  - a. And so, while we can say DETAILS of His death – such as, being mocked, scourged and crucified – have an air of PROPHETIC fulfillment, it could be argued that ANY man, like Jesus, who claimed to be the Messiah would suffer a similar fate, if he could be arrested and put on trial.
- B. But when it comes to the claims of Jesus that He was the Son of God, and that as PROOF of His deity He would be resurrected from the dead in three days – only a complete IDIOT or a LIAR would even DARE to make those claims UNLESS HE KNEW THOSE CLAIMS WERE TRUE!
  1. C.S. Lewis, who was a professor at Cambridge University and a former agnostic, wrote this wonderful defense for believing Jesus is the Son of God: "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him (Jesus): 'I'm trying 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 a 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 up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

2. And so, C.S. Lewis came up with what is called THE GREAT TRILEMMA.
  - a. The claims Jesus made leave us with only THREE CHOICES: He was either a LUNATIC, a LIAR, or He is the LORD.
  - b. There are no other choices when it comes to how we are FORCED to see Jesus – He is either LORD, LIAR, or LUNATIC.
3. In fact, the apostle Paul linked the RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ from the dead DIRECTLY to the PROOF that He is IN FACT declared to be the SON OF GOD.
  - a. **Romans 1:1-4** – *Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of*

*the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*

- C. And so, let's take some time here to carefully examine the CLAIMS of Jesus and see for OURSELVES whether or not those claims were made by the LORD, or by a LIAR, or by a LUNITIC.

**BODY:**

- I. There is no question about the fact that Jesus OPENLY claimed to be God the Son.
- A. In fact, Jesus repeatedly claimed to be EQUAL with the Father.
1. **John 10:30-33** – *"I and My Father are one." Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."*
    - a. When Jesus said, "I and My Father are ONE," He used a word that means "one in essence or nature."
    - b. A.T. Robertson, a Greek scholar, writes, "This crisp statement is the climax of Christ's claims concerning the relationship

between the Father and Himself (the Son). They stir the Pharisees to uncontrolled anger."

- c. It is evident that in the minds of those who heard this statement, there was no doubt but that Jesus claimed He was deity (God the Son).
- d. The words of Jesus could only be considered as blasphemy, and the Jews proceeded to take judgment into their own hands by preparing to stone Jesus according to the Law **(Leviticus 24:16)**.
- e. They would not have attempted to stone Him for simply saying He and the Father were one in purpose, or one in agreement.
- f. They clearly understood Jesus to say He and the Father were one in essence and nature – a Divine essence and nature (deity).

2. **John 5:17-18** – *But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.*

- a. A.T. Robertson writes, "Jesus distinctly says, 'My Father' (ho pater mou). Not 'our Father,' claim to peculiar relation to the

Father. Worketh even until now (heos arti ergazetai)... Jesus put himself on a par with God's activity and thus justifies his healing on the Sabbath."

- b. The Jews did not refer to God as "My Father," unless they added the phrase "in heaven," because to do so would be to claim equality with God. However, Jesus didn't add the phrase "in heaven," but simply called God His Father, making Himself equal with God.
- c. Furthermore, when Jesus said that while God works, He also works, the Jews clearly understood the implication.

(1). God had healed this man on the Sabbath, and so Jesus worked on the Sabbath as well, because He is God the Son.

(2). This is why the Jews sought to kill Him.

- 3. **John 8:58-59** – *Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*

- a. In the Old Testament, the "I AM" (Greek "eimi") was a name God gave to Himself (**Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 32:39; Isaiah 43:10**).

(1). This term means the Eternally Existent One, or the Eternal One.

- b. When Jesus said, "before Abraham was, I AM," He was also claiming to be the "I AM" of the Old Testament – the Eternally Existent One, or the Eternal One! Jesus didn't say, "before Abraham was, I was" – suggesting He once lived before Abraham lived.
- c. Rather, He said, "before Abraham was, I AM" – meaning that He is eternal and self-existent, just as the Father is eternal and self-existent.

B. When faced with the claim of Jesus to be the Son of God, we are faced with two choices.

- 1. His claims were false.
- 2. His claims were true.

II. If the claims Jesus made are FALSE, then there are only two choices that remain: either He knew His claims were false, or He didn't know His claims were false.

A. Let's assume Jesus KNEW His claims were false – what would that say about Him?

- 1. He DELIBERATELY misrepresented Himself.

- a. It would NOT have been a mistake. His statements would have been a DELIBERATE attempt to pass Himself off as the Messiah.
2. He would be a liar.
    - a. We certainly could not say Jesus made these claims of being the Son of God ACCIDENTLY. NOR could we say the claims of Jesus being the Son of God were made only by His disciples, and not by the Lord Himself.
    - b. Don't forget – Jesus was convicted before the Sanhedrin of blasphemy on the basis of His OWN testimony.
      - (1). **Mark 14:61-64** – *Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.*
  - c. There can be absolutely no mistake about it – Jesus OPENLY claimed to be the Son of God LONG before His disciples ever wrote a word of the gospel accounts.

3. He would be a hypocrite.
  - a. The word hypocrite came from the Greek theater where actors spoke their lines from behind masks, and came to mean anyone who acts out a role that is completely different from their true character.
  - b. Jesus OPENLY portrayed Himself to be the Son of God. If Jesus was nothing more than a mere MORTAL like everyone else, He clearly LIED and was a HYPOCRITE – trying to pass Himself off as something He was NOT.
4. He would have been demonically influenced.
  - a. Only someone who was unspeakably evil could have misled people into believing he could give them eternal life.
  - b. The Bible tells us Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44), and anyone who claimed to be the Son of God would have certainly been demonically INFLUENCED – to say the LEAST.
5. He would have died a fool.
  - a. Jesus' claim to be the Son of God resulted in Him being CRUCIFIED.

- b. If Jesus was only a MAN, He died a complete FOOL – NEEDLESSLY suffering the most cruel form of death imaginable.

B. But what is Jesus DIDN'T know His claims were false:

1. He would have sincerely deluded.

- a. Actually, the FAMILY of Jesus [His brothers] thought He was deluded.

(1). **Mark 3:21** – *But when His own people heard about this [allegedly performing miracles on the Sabbath and upsetting the Pharisees], they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."*

(2). **John 7:2-5** – *Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For even His brothers did not believe in Him.*

- b. But following the RESURRECTION of Jesus from the dead and His ascension into heaven, the Lord's brothers were listed among His DISCIPLES.

(1). **Acts 1:12-14** – *Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.*

(2). The apostle Paul calls James, the Lord's brother, an APOSTLE, and then says James reputed to be one of the PILLARS of the Jerusalem church. (**Galatians 1:18-19; 2:7-9**)

(3). In fact, two books of the New Testament – James and Jude – were written by the Lord's brothers.

2. If Jesus DIDN'T know His claims were false He would have also been a lunatic with delusions of grandeur.
  - a. For someone to think He is God is the HEIGHT of insanity, and would have placed Jesus in the same category of every OTHER lunatic who claimed to be a divine being.

- b. And ADD to this the fact the Jesus actually claimed that He would be RESURRECTED from the dead EXACTLY THREE DAYS after His crucifixion!
    - c. NO ONE except a lunatic with delusions of grandeur would DARE to make a claim like THAT claim.
  3. So, if the claims made by Jesus of being the Son of God were FALSE, then we are left with only the TWO CHOICES – He was either a LIAR or a LUNATIC
- C. But when you look carefully at the life and teachings of Jesus it's easy to see that He was clearly NOT a liar NOR a lunatic.
  1. The life and teachings of Jesus are certainly NOT those of a deceiver and a liar.
    - a. His teachings raised the moral consciousness of mankind to the HIGHEST LEVEL IMAGINABLE.
  2. Furthermore, the CHARACTER of Jesus CERTAINLY is not that of a lunatic with delusions of grandeur.
    - a. He is always seen in complete control of EVERY situation, never acting harshly, or irrationally.
    - b. And even the way He treated His ENEMIES speaks of one who possesses GREAT emotional strength and stability.

III. So, if Jesus is not a LIAR, nor a LUNATIC, then His claims could NOT have been false – His claims of being the Son of God would have been TRUE:

A. And if His claims were TRUE, then we are left with only one choice – He IS Lord!

1. This would mean Jesus IS who He claimed to be.

a. He IS the Son of God, and is equal to the Father – just as He said (John 10:30-33; John 5:17-18; John 8:58-59).

b. He IS worthy of the SAME honors given to God.

(1). **John 5:20-23** – Jesus said: *For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*

c. And, He IS worthy of worship.

(1). **Matthew 8:2** – *And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."* Jesus ACCEPTED WORSHIP!

(2). There are OTHER examples of where Jesus openly accepted the worship and adoration of others. (John 9:35-39; Matthew 14:33)

B. AND, if Jesus IS Lord, then that leaves us with ONLY TWO CHOICES:

1. We either accept Him as our Lord and Savior.
  - a. To do this, we need to believe (John 3:16; Hebrews 11:6).
  - b. We need to repent (Luke 13:3).
  - c. We need to confess our faith in Him (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10).
  - d. We need to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:1-4; 1 Peter 3:21).
2. Or we reject Him.
  - a. And SADLY, some DO reject the Lord – INSPITE of all the evidence that clearly shows He IS the Son of God.
  - b. And the reason I say SADLY, is because there are serious CONSEQUENCES facing those who reject Jesus as God the Son.
    - (1). **Luke 10:16** – *"He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."*

(2). If you reject JESUS, then you are also rejecting the GOD OF HEAVEN who SENT Him.

(3). And if you reject the GOD OF HEAVEN who SENT Him, there's no way heaven can be your home when you die.

## **CONCLUSION:**

- I. When you examine all the evidence regarding the claims of Jesus of being the Son of God, there's really only ONE CHOICE.
  - A. Jesus truly IS the Son of God.
    1. You need to accept that fact, AND you need to surrender your life to Him in complete obedience.
    2. Have you done that? Have you come to the Lord in complete trust and obedience?
    3. And if you've done that, have you wandered away from the Lord, and need to come back home?