**21st CENTURY APOLOGETICS, PART 2 Class 15…**

“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.” ― [**C.S. Lewis**](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/1069006.C_S_Lewis), [**Mere Christianity**](http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/801500)

Last week, we examined the Archaeological Evidence for the validity of the Gospels. Although the book we are using as the basis for our study, The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel, covers the topic of the REBUTTLE EVIDENCE, we will NOT spend any time on that topic in this course.

The reason is that we are FULLY aware that there has and continues to exist multitudes who deny that Jesus is the Messiah. We accept that fact and don't feel the need to discuss the objections of leading skeptics, which will do NOTHING to add to our goal of proving that Jesus IS the Messiah.

So, in the last class, we concluded a study of PART 1 of the book, The Case for Christ, which Lee Strobel titled, "Examining the Record", where we conducted a VERY thorough investigation of all the EVIDENCE for the existence of Jesus and His claim that He is THE SON OF GOD.

A. Today, we begin, PART 2…"Analyzing Jesus"

 1. Here, we will investigate ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE that focuses on the more PERSONAL evidence for and information about Jesus. For example, we will examine:

 a. **The Identity Evidence**: was JESUS, Himself, convinced that He was the Son of God?)

 b. **The Psychological Evidence**: was Jesus CRAZY/INSANE when and because He claimed to be the Son of God?

 c. **The Profile Evidence**: did Jesus fulfill the ATTRIBUTES of God?

 d. **The "Fingerprint" Evidence**: did Jesus…and ONLY JESUS…match the "identity" of the Messiah?

**THESE WILL BE SOME OF THE MOST EXCITING AND SIGNIFICANT DISCUSSIONS OF OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH!**

So, let's begin with the…IDENTITY EVIDENCE…

(**NOTE:** Today we will begin with the INDIRECT ways by which Jesus claimed to be God…by things he does and by IMPLICATION; next week, we'll examine how He actually SAYS he is God.)

A. Lee Strobel enlists the help of Dr. Ben Witherington III as his expert for this part of the evidence (you can read about his credentials on pp. 132 and 133 of the book.)

 1. Strobel begins this part of the investigation by suggesting that we proceed with techniques similar to those the FBI uses:

 a. By closely examining the evidence at a crime scene and by interviewing eyewitnesses, we can figure out exactly what a criminal SAID and DID.

 b. These "clues" give us an idea of the PSYCOLOGICAL MAKEUP of the person. In other words, do YOU think that a person's WORDS or BEHAVIORS tell you something about a person?

 c. Can we figure out a person's MOTIVES? INTENTIONS? SELF- UNDERSTANDING? By things they SAID and DID?

**QUESTION:** Can you give any examples from REAL LIFE of ways we can figure out WHO a person is or WHAT THEY'VE ACCOMPLISHED or SAID that was important?

Having convinced ourselves that we CAN, indeed, deduce a person's IDENTITY by things they said and did, let's begin our investigation of THE JESUS IDENTITY (Identity Evidence)

TODAY, we'll begin by looking at the INDIRECT (by implication) ways Jesus claimed to be God…

A. How did Jesus, EXACTLY, identify Himself as "THE SON OF GOD"?

 1. He forms a core group of followers (12 Apostles). He is, obviously, not just one of the them…but the "Leader"

 2. He has a "relationship" with John the Baptist…calls him the greatest man to ever live…and then goes BEYOND what John did…MIRACLES!

**QUESTION:** If Jesus, who called John the Baptist "the greatest man to EVER live, and went BEYOND what John the Baptist did what does that make HIM?

 3. Also, consider the *radical statements* He makes to the religious leaders, especially statements that NULLIFY the Old Testament

 a**. READ:** Mark 7: 14 – 19. Here. Jesus challenges the meticulous "rules" described in Leviticus' regarding what to eat and what not to eat

 1. What is the point? **ONLY GOD CAN NULLIFY HIS OWN LAWS!**

 2. Consider what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount regarding the Law. **READ:** Matt 5: 17 – 18

 a. What is the point? **ONLY GOD CAN FULFILL THE LAW**

 4. Continuing with important statements Jesus made in public:

 a. **READ:** Matt 5: 21 – 22; Matt 5: 27 – 28; Matt 5: 31 – 32; etc.

 b. What is the point? **ONLY GOD CAN EXPAND THE LAW!**

 **5.**  **READ:** Mark 2: 1 -12; Luke 7: 36 – 50

 a. What is the point? **ONLY GOD CAN FORGIVE SIN!**

 6. How about Jesus' dealings with the Roman authorities?

 a. If He was only a "nuisance" why did he wind up on a CROSS!

 1. Typically, crazy nobodies were ignored or put in jail or beat up, etc. Only the truly "dangerous" (like Barabus and the two thieves) were gotten rid of for good.

 b. How do we explain the SIGN over His head on the cross (i.e., "This is the King of the Jews")? They must have heard that somewhere!

 7. Jesus accepts PRAYER and WORSHIP

 a. **READ:** Matt 9: 27 -29; Matt 28: 8 -10

Next week, we will continue examining the Identity Evidence about Jesus, especially his DIRECT claims to be the Son of God!