**What You Should Know from NT3-Life & Teachings of Jesus**

Lakeside Institute of Theology

1. What are the primary sources we have for the life and teaching of Jesus?
   * The Four Gospel accounts – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
2. What witness is there that Jesus has always existed, co-eternal with God the Father?
   * The Gospel of John, Chapter 1 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning…. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
3. Using the first chapter of John’s Gospel as an outline, what characteristics do we see in Jesus?
   * Jesus has always existed. *(“In the beginning was the Word…”*)
   * Jesus is divine. *(“… the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*)
   * Jesus was co-eternal with God the Father. (*“He was with God in the beginning.”*)
   * Jesus was the creative force behind all things. (“*Through him all things were made…”*)
   * Jesus was & is the source of life and light for the world. (“*In him was life & that life was the light of all mankind... The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.”*)
   * Jesus was rejected by his own Jewish people. (*“He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.”*)
   * But all who did accept Him were redeemed. *(“Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”*)
   * Jesus became Incarnate on earth. (*“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us*.”)
4. Galatians 4:4, in the King James Version, popularly says that Jesus was born “in the fullness of time.” What does that mean?
   * Jesus was born at *just the right time* – the time of God’s choosing in order to have the maximum positive impact for the Incarnation.
5. What factors caused the 1st Century AD to be the perfect time for the coming of the Messiah?
   * Palestine was the crossroads of the world – the central point between three continents (Europe, Asia and Africa).
   * Politically and culturally it was the perfect time for the Gospel message to be shared and for the Church to grow, because:
     1. The Roman roads made travel easy, with no real borders since Rome ruled almost all the known world.
     2. The Roman peace (*Pax Romana*) made travel safe.
     3. Thanks to Alexander the Great, the Greek language was universal, so that it was easy to communicate across cultures.
   * Economically, there was a desperate need for new hope and direction.
   * Morally and religiously, the world was tired and frustrated and ready for a change.
6. Why is the New Testament written in Greek?
   * When Alexander the Great conquered almost the whole known world in the mid-4th century BC, he spread the Greek culture and language so that, by the time of Jesus, Greek was the language most widely used in Mediterranean world.
7. What are the Synoptic Gospels, and why are they called that?
   * Matthew, Mark, and Luke. “Synoptic” means “seen together” or “same seeing” and refers to the inherent similarities in approach, style and content between these first three Gospels. (As opposed to John’s Gospel, which is more theological and has much different content.)
8. Why is Matthew listed as the first of the Gospels and the first book in the New Testament?
   * Matthew is the most Jewish of the Gospels, intended for a Jewish audience, and so has always been seen as the most appropriate “bridge" document between the Old and New Testaments.
9. How does Matthew’s Gospel present Jesus?
   * Matthew’s Gospel emphasizes Jesus as king & judge of Israel, fulfilling Old Testament prophecy with great power and authority. Matthew features long discourses such as Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5–7), parables of the kingdom (13), and criticism of scribes & Pharisees.
10. Which Gospel was probably written first, and why do we think this is so?
    * The Gospel of Mark, because 76% of Mark is contained almost verbatim in both Matthew and Luke, and another 21% is contained in *either* Matthew or Luke – making it seem apparent that both Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source in writing their Gospels. Of the 661 verse in Mark, only 31 verses are not found in either Matthew or Luke or both.
11. How does Mark’s Gospel present Jesus?
    * Mark’s Gospel is the shortest Gospel, full of action, and stressing the miraculous power of Jesus more than his words. Mark may have been writing with Roman readers in mind, and may be writing the account according to Peter, due to Mark’s close association with Peter.
12. How does Luke’s Gospel present Jesus?
    * Luke’s Gospel, with highly polished Greek, likely written to a Greek/Gentile audience, emphasizing forgiveness, love, and the universal availability of salvation. Many parables are unique to Luke (i.e., the Prodigal Son), and Luke has the most emphasis on women, prayer, hope, Holy Spirit, and Nativity of Jesus.
13. How does John’s Gospel present Jesus?
    * John Gospelis the most theological, concerned more with the Jesus as the eternal Son of God and Messiah/Christ than with places and events. John gives a more intimate picture of Jesus, emphasizing his relationship to the Father, to the Twelve, and others.
14. How does the Gospel of John differ from the other three Gospels?
    * There is virtually no shared verbatim material between John and the Synoptic Gospels, in the way that material is shared between the Synoptic Gospels.
    * John is clearly less interested in recording the events in Jesus’ life, and more interested in explaining the theological meaning *behind* what happened and what was said.
    * Whereas the Synoptic Gospels usually present Jesus’ teaching in the form of short sayings and parables, John presents Jesus’ teaching in much longer theological discourses.
15. Describe the Jewish “Messianic Expectation” leading up to Jesus.
    * The Messiah (“Anointed One”) was expected to be a descendant of David, sent by God to defeat Israel’s enemies and again make the Jewish people into a great nation as they had been under King David.
    * The Messianic expectation in Israel goes back to God’s covenant promise to King David, and the hoped-for correction of what appeared to be the end of the Davidic dynasty after the defeat of the Southern Kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians.
16. In what ways did Jesus fulfill the Jewish Messianic Expectations?
    * He was a descendant of David (Isaiah 11)
    * Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
    * Associated with Galilee (Isaiah 9:1-3)
    * Born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)
    * His birth would prompt the massacre of children (Jeremiah 31:15)
    * Would spend time in Egypt (Hosea 11:1)
    * A forerunner would prepare the way (Isaiah 40:3-5)
    * To enter Jerusalem riding on the foal of a donkey (Zechariah 9:9)
    * Would have hands, feet and side pierced (Ps. 22:16; Zech. 12:10)
    * Soldiers would gamble for his garments (Psalm 22:18)
    * Would be crucified with criminals (Isaiah 53:12)
    * Would be given vinegar to drink (Psalm 69:21)
    * Would be declared King of the Jews (John 19:19ff)
    * Would be declared the Son of God (Psalm 2:7)
    * The Suffering Servant – despised, rejected, stricken, afflicted, pierced for our transgressions, punished so that we might have peace, silent to his accusers, buried among the rich, returned to life after bearing the sins of many. (Isaiah 53:1-12)
17. Who were the witnesses to Jesus’ birth, and how do they reflect the universality of Jesus’ mission?
    * *Mary & Joseph – simple, poor, VERY Jewish*
    * *The Magi – sophisticated and scholarly, wealthy, foreigners*
    * *The Shepherds – younger, outdoorsy, likely not very religious*
    * *Simeon & Anna – old, city dwellers, very pious*
18. Why did Joseph and Mary take the infant Jesus to Egypt?
    * King Herod the Great, having learned from the Magi of the birth of the true “King of the Jews,” attempted to find and destroy Jesus – which led to the slaughter of all male children in Bethlehem who were two years old and younger.
19. After being told in a vision that King Herod the Great was dead, why did Joseph, Mary and Jesus not return to Bethlehem, going instead to Galilee?
    * Because Herod’s most tyrannical son, Archelaus, had been made ruler over Judea and Samaria, and there was concern that he, too, might be a danger to Jesus.
20. What two events marked the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry?
    * His baptism by John the Baptist.
    * His temptation in the wilderness.
21. What was the primary role of John the Baptist in Jesus’ ministry?
    * He was the “forerunner” – the one sent to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.
22. How and why did John the Baptist die?
    * John was arrested by Herod Antipas (one of Herod the Great’s sons who ruled over Galilee and Perea) after he preached against Antipas having married his sister-in-law, Herodias. After Salome, Herodias’ daughter, pleased Herod by dancing he promised to give her whatever she asked. Prompted by her mother, Salome asked for the head of John the Baptist, and Herod felt he had to comply.
23. What were the Devil’s three temptations to Jesus in the wilderness?
    * For Jesus to satisfy his hunger by turning stones into bread.
    * For Jesus to throw himself off the pinnacle of the Temple, in the assurance that God the Father would send angels to save him.
    * For Jesus to become ruler of all the world’s kingdoms by worshipping Satan.

1. Why might the three temptations in the wilderness have been real temptations to Jesus?
   * Because under different circumstances, all three were things Jesus would have wanted – to provide food to the hungry, to declare himself as God’s Son, and to take his rightful place as king over all creation.
2. What was Jesus core message throughout his ministry?
   * The kingdom of God (or kingdom of heaven in Matthew).
3. What is the likely reason that Matthew uses the expression “kingdom of heaven” instead of “kingdom of God” as the other gospels do, even in passages that otherwise are exactly parallel?
   * As the most Jewish of the Gospel writers, Matthew would have been more concerned and cautious about using God’s name or even a reference that might have suggested God’s name, since this was forbidden to the Jews. So he used “kingdom of heaven” instead of “kingdom of God.”
4. What is meant by “the kingdom of God?”
   * “Kingdom of God” means the reign, rule, authority or sovereignty of God. It does *not* mean a location where the king rules, which is suggested by the English meaning of the word “kingdom.”
5. What are some common misconceptions and misunderstandings people have about the kingdom of God?
   * That it means heaven or the afterlife, and that Jesus was simply saying you can go to heaven when you die. Jesus also said that while he was present “the kingdom of God is in your midst.”
   * That the kingdom of God refers to the Church.
   * That the kingdom of God will only be in the future.
   * That the kingdom of God means a world in which God’s divine justice will be present.
6. What is meant by the expression “already, but not yet” with regards to the kingdom of God?
   * That the kingdom of God arrived and was present in Jesus, but it will not be fully realized until he returns and establishes his complete reign over all creation.
7. What are the two ways Jesus introduced the kingdom of God?
   * Through his words (what he said) – teaching and preaching.
   * Through his actions (what he did) – living a perfect life; and showing his authority by healing people from disease, driving out demons and performing nature miracles.
8. What were the “nature miracles?”
   * Miracles Jesus performed by using natural elements in the world – multiplying loaves and fish, walking on water, calming the storm, etc.
9. Why did many Jews not accept that Jesus was the Messiah?
   * The Jews expected the Messiah to be *primarily* a political and military leader who would drive out the oppressors (the Romans) and reestablish Israel to its former greatness under King David. Jesus was not that kind of Messiah, as his eventual kingdom reign was to be much bigger than this Jewish geo-political ambition.
10. How did Jesus’ teaching differ from what people were used to hearing from other teachers and leaders of that time?
    * Jesus taught with personal authority *(“Truly, I say to you…”).*
    * He did not use the philosophical jargon common to the time.
    * His teaching was in very down-to-earth language, often illustrated with stories and activities from everyday life.
11. How did Jesus relate to and communicate about the Jewish (or Mosaic) Law?
    * Jesus emphasized the true meaning and spirit of the Law as a reflection of God’s character, and of himself as the fulfillment of the Law.
    * Jesus focused on the very character of god, who gave the Law; and summed up the whole of the Law in love for God and for others.
    * Jesus emphasized both God’s free grace offered to sinners AND the high cost of discipleship.
12. How are we to understand Jesus teaching on poverty and wealth?
    * Jesus’ teaching on poverty and wealth must be seen as both literal and spiritual.
13. What is a “parable” as Jesus used them?
    * A parable is a short story or illustration that uses vivid and memorable scenes from everyday life to teach a profound spiritual truth.
14. What principles should we apply to help us understand the parables of Jesus?
    * Interpret the parable first in the context of Jesus’ ministry.
    * Relate the parable to his preaching on the kingdom of God.
    * Recognize the cultural and literary background of the parable in Judaism and the Old Testament.
    * Look for the one primary point of the parable.
    * Exercise caution concerning use of allegory.
    * Determine the narrative function of the parable in the Gospel in which it appears.
15. Why do people today have so much difficulty accepting the miraculous aspects of Jesus’ ministry?
    * Belief or disbelief in miracles in based on a person’s philosophical or historical presuppositions – about the existence and power of God, and about the existence of the supernatural.
    * Yet Jesus’ miracles are critically important in the Gospels, as they revealed the power and presence of the Kingdom of God in Jesus’ actions.

1. How was Jesus perceived by his contemporaries – that is, people who lived during that time?
   * There is near universal agreement that Jesus was viewed by his contemporaries as a healer and exorcist.
2. What clear claims to authority did Jesus make in his lifetime on earth?
   * The authority to announce and establish the kingdom of God
   * That he was the agent of God’s final salvation
   * He demonstrated practically his authority over disease and demons
   * The right to preach and teach on his own divine authority
   * Authority over the Law – especially the Sabbath
   * The ability to forgive sins
   * That every person’s eternal destiny was based on a relationship with him
   * That he would be the authority at the final judgment
3. What can we say Jesus was trying to accomplish during his earthly ministry?
   * To announce and begin the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth
   * To provide a means for forgiveness of sin & reconciliation back to God
   * To create a community of faith to usher in this new kingdom age
4. How did Jesus consistently refer to God?
   * Jesus consistently described God in one word – “Father”
     + “Father” occurs more than 150 times in the Gospels.
     + Jesus first recorded words: *“I must be about my Father’s business.”*
     + And his last words: *“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”*
5. How is Jesus’ use of “Father” in reference to God different from how God is typically perceived in the Old Testament?
   * Old Testament references to God as Father are almost never in the sense of personal relationship, but instead present God as Father of the nation of Israel.
6. In what two ways was Jesus’ teaching about God as Father original?
   * He made God’s Fatherhood the *central* perception of God.
   * He imbued the understanding of God as Father with all the richness that came from a perfect union between Father and Son.
7. In what ways did Jesus teach the idea of God as “Father?”
   * Jesus taught that God the Father is vitally interested in His children’s concerns.
   * That God knows and loves each individual soul.
   * Because God is our loving Father, we can come to him as his children, and not with formality.
   * Since God is our Father, pain has meaning. (children are disciplined by a Father who loves them)
   * God as loving Father changes the meaning of sin and forgiveness – from law-breaking to a betrayal of love; and from penal satisfaction to compassionate reconciliation. (as in The Prodigal Son)
   * If God is our Father, then all of us are brothers and sisters. (*“Our Father, who art in heaven…”)*
8. What were the Messianic titles for Jesus?
   * Messiah/Christ – the Anointed One
   * Son of David
   * Son of Man
   * Son of God
   * Lord
9. What two purposes did Jesus have in calling the 12 Apostles?
   * To be his friends, for fellowship and for training.
   * To prepare them to carry on the ministry and establish the Church after Jesus ascended to heaven.
10. What groups opposed Jesus during his earthly ministry and why?
    * The Pharisees – because they perceived Jesus as preaching and teaching against the Mosaic Law and Jewish tradition, especially in his attitude towards the Sabbath.
    * The Sadducees – as the authority figures in Judaism, they controlled the Sanhedrin and Temple worship, and they perceived Jesus as a threat to that authority.
    * The Roman authorities – because the Jewish leaders had convinced the Romans that Jesus was guilty of sedition and that he threatened rebellion against Roman rule.
11. What was the significance of Jesus’ death?
    * The death of Jesus was a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people (*all* people who would accept Jesus), and so – as a *perfect* sacrifice – fulfilled once and for all the requirement from the Mosaic Law that blood must be shed for the forgiveness of sins.
12. What was the significance of the resurrection of Jesus?
    * The resurrection of Jesus established Jesus’ authority as the Son of God by marking the defeat of Satan, sin and death; announced the beginning of the last days and affirmed the establishment of the kingdom of God; and was a precursor to the final resurrection of all people at the end of this world.