

The Many Faces of Jesus – NOT the God of our expectations....

Intro: Did anybody see the Flood coming? Or the captivity of Israel and the disappearance of ten of the twelve tribes forever? How about the cross? How about leaving the Kingdom behind on earth in the hands men who described themselves as nothing but clay jars?

God is not the God of our expectations; and we still can't deal very well with that. He comes at you from many different directions and in many different forms. And the impact He has on you? Absolutely unpredictable?

Our sisters worshipping in Africa – two surprises there. One is that they don't worship like we do, and the second is their gratitude and joy seems SO much more than ours. We are drowning in blessings and fellowship, yet they are jumping for joy at the name of Jesus. Hmmm.

I. The Many Faces of Jesus

- A.** Let's examine the face of Jesus. Was Jesus black? Asian? White? Was He in any way what you would have expected him to be?
- B.** The Jews expected the Messiah to be different things. Jesus managed to upset almost all of them.
 - 1. John 1:
 - 2. The Zealots expected a warrior leader. And they were in place helping him get there! (the two kinds of Zealots)
 - 3. The Pharisees expected a leader that would establish a pure, strict, legalistic religion. And there were there to help him out.
 - 4. The Essenes were looking for moral purity and withdrew to the desert to help the Messiah out.
- C.** And when He arrived? He came from Nazareth of Galilee. People from there were considered country bumpkins. Their accents were so thick Peter's was recognizable years later. These hicks weren't able to learn other languages to any meaningful standard because of those accents and their lack of higher education.
 - 1. The BBC special series. Would a short, overweight Jesus offend you? How about chinless

or cross-eyed? Buck toothed? Is this offensive yet?

2. The only physical description we have of Jesus in the Bible is that found in Isaiah and it isn't a pleasant one.
3. In the Middle Ages there were many who read this and taught that Jesus was a hunchback or that he had a skin disease.
4. One thing for certain: Jesus didn't glow like a Dollar Store nightlight.
5. John the Baptist said he wouldn't have known him without divine revelation.

II. A Complex Savior

- A.** There were Zealots in his group, yet he socialized with foreigners and Gentiles.
- B.** Mark saw him as emotional – and often angry. Luke saw him more composed and steady headed: almost a Prozac Jesus.
 1. Mark 1:41 – anger toward the leper. Luke and Matthew leave that out.
 2. Mark 3:5 – with anger in the synagogue. As above.
 3. Mark 10:14 – aggravated at his disciples.
 4. Matthew and Luke never describe Jesus as angry. He looked different to them.
- C.** In the Gospels, Jesus is incredibly interesting. He has such charisma that people will sit three days straight, without food, just to listen to him.
 1. He is excitable, impulsively “moved with compassion” or “filled with pity.”
 2. We see sympathy, exuberance, anger, grief, anguish, patience..
 3. He doesn't hesitate to ask others for help: “stay here and keep watch with me.”
 4. He praised others at every opportunity. And he attacked them when they were too rigid.
 5. C.S. Lewis, “He was not at all like the psychologist's picture of the integrated, balanced, adjusted, happily married, employed, popular

citizen. You can't really be very well adjusted to your world if it says you have a devil and ends by nailing you up naked to a stake of wood."

III. Surprising Appearances

- A.** As the Angel of the Lord, Jesus appeared to several people in the Old Testament days. To a thrown away woman whose husband wouldn't protect her, who feared for the life of her son. To an aging nomad who had immigrated to a strange land and was still searching for his place. Before the city of Jerusalem to block the progress of the angel of death.
- B.** We want the world to know THIS Jesus; not the cardboard cutout that religion so often portrays, but the real Jesus that has real impact on real people from here to, well, Uganda, and back again.
- C.** Wayne in Meaford. David Underwood's little boy in the elevator. Messengers of Jesus? How would He appear to us today?
- D.** Inviting others to Easter. Satellite churches. If our Messiah is surprising, emotional, and powerful, then WE want to be surprising, emotional, and powerful. We will join with Him as he goes into the homes of our neighbors, into our schools, into the Gulf, into the Bronx.
- E.** We do this because God did it. Jesus told the people that if they'd known His Father, they would have known Him. Perhaps that is where we made our mistake. We painted God as adventurous and dangerous, and Jesus as holding a baby lamb – controlled and passive. Safe. But Jesus, the Messiah, the Angel of the Lord, the Son of God is like His Father.
- F.** How would He appear to us today? Let's ask another question. How can He use us to appear to someone today?
- G.** Just as His Father never stopped reaching out to everyone in every place in every way, we will do the same. Join us.

Invade us. Use us. Take us to the people you want to see Jesus. And let us shine with His light to them, every day, in any way you desire.