

## The Unsearchable Christ

David Flatt

Throughout the His life, people questioned the nature of Jesus. Who was this strange man? Herod the Tetrarch was greatly puzzled about Jesus. The Bible says, “Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. Herod said, “John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?” And he sought to see him” (Luke 9:7-9).

Today, there is a wide awareness in the world about Jesus. However, most are not as troubled about Jesus as Herod was. Many people, including those who claim to be followers, have a rather domesticated view of Jesus. Jesus and His teachings have been reduced to self-help and personal development. We have managed to tame Him and His power, or so we think.

In Ephesians chapter three, the apostle Paul recounted how God had chosen him to preach to the Gentiles “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8). The unsearchable Christ is Jesus. Such a description of the treasure of Jesus must challenge our current understanding of Him. Whatever we know of Jesus or in whatever ways we have become like Him is just the tip of the iceberg. We must search deeper and deeper.

Our reduction of Jesus may not be intentional; however, the consequences are serious. Fashioning Him into someone who is manageable and personally palatable is idolatry. We make an idol called “Jesus.” When Jesus becomes predictable, uninteresting, or searchable, we have gone wrong.

One of the ways we reduce Jesus is by focusing on certain attributes at the exclusion of others. For example, most people want a friendly version of Jesus, but not a kingly version of Jesus. In this article, we will attempt to bring several attributes of Jesus together. This will help form a fuller understanding of the unsearchable Christ.

### The Unsearchable Christ Is...

**1). Ruling.** Jesus is not just a historic figure from the ancient past. He has a present existence. By His cruel death, surprising resurrection from the dead, and triumphant ascension to Heaven, God made Jesus King. While preaching to the household of Cornelius, Peter said that Jesus was Lord of all (Acts 10:36). As the anointed Lord of all, His rule will never end. Therefore, we must obey Jesus. Jesus being Lord of all means He is my Lord.

**2). Saving.** Jesus said that He came to the world to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He came to save us from the consequences of our sins: eternal death. His salvation was made possible by His death. By Jesus’ death, He saved us from the wrath of God (Rom. 5:8). The saving power of Jesus continues to reach out to us today. Yet, Jesus’ salvation can only be received by faith. We must trust in Him, His cross, and His resurrection.

**3). Transforming.** The domesticated version of Jesus ignores Jesus' intent to transform us. Many people want to be saved, but they do not want to be transformed. They want to be forgiven, but they do not want to change. Jesus saves us to transform us.

Jesus challenges our attitudes and behaviors. He subverts our hearts. He demands we relinquish our sins and adopt His self-giving love. Only by being transformed can we share in His rule of the world. He wants to use us as instruments of His justice and holiness. The need for transformation is why we cannot reduce Jesus to someone who justifies our sins or acts on our demands. This kind of selfishness will only prevent us from becoming useful in His service. As He did with Cephas, Jesus gives us a new name and a new purpose.

**4). Befriending.** Jesus wants us to walk with Him in friendship. He wants us to experience a loving, tender relationship with Him. But, we must be careful. We can reduce Jesus through the attribute of friendship. We cannot treat Jesus like one of the guys. This is often how the friendly version of Jesus is considered.

The friendship Jesus offers is best understood through His relationship with the apostles. At the end of His life, Jesus told them, "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14). Our relationship with Jesus is based on our obedience to His commands. He compels our obedience by cross. He gave His life for us. Therefore, Jesus is not a peer, colleague, or equal. He is our God. As such, He desires to have a loving relationship with us. He has done His part to make such a relationship possible. We must do our part by keeping His commands.

**5). Returning.** Jesus has promised to return to the world. As preeminent ruler of Heaven and earth, He is coming in judgment against those who have refused to submit to His reign (2 Thess. 1:5-9). As Savior, He also is returning to gather the saints of His kingdom (1 Cor. 15:24).

The promised return of Jesus creates a present accountability to Him. The resurrection of Jesus gives validity to His return. This is why our relationship with Jesus matters.

### **Conclusion**

In our secular, materialistic culture, Jesus is easily reduced to nothing more than a wise teacher of antiquity. In polite society, we are permitted to use Jesus for personal development, but nothing more. View Jesus as more than human, and we will be quickly dismissed.

The truth is that Jesus did not come to earth to prove He was human. Jesus came to earth in human form to prove that He was God. Jesus declared, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins" (John 8:23-24). If we want to receive Him and His promises for all they are worth, we must look to Jesus as Thomas did: our Lord and our God (John 20:28).