

# **Jesus of Nazareth**

## **More than an Avatar**

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## More Than an Avatar

Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." *John 14:9 NIV*

As time goes by, more and more people have come to regard God and the Bible as largely fictitious and especially the notion of God becoming man in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; this in spite of the Bible's clear declaration that it is factual. But, as time goes by, the rapid advance of information technology is beginning to make it more, not less, believable and easier to understand.

To quote an old saying, truth is often stranger than fiction. As science advances, it has become increasingly transparent how little we really know about reality-as-it-is. Things that we thought we knew have had to be modified and sometimes unlearned. Concepts once thought to be pure science fiction, black holes for instance, have turned out to be very real.

The following article, a recently revised chapter in my earlier book, *A Gamers' Guide to the Gospel*, hopes to shed just a little more light on a subject that the Church has wrestled with for two thousand years.

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Friar Frump trudged the dusty roads of Stonefalls Province, making for Fort Virak and the Zabamat Dolmen, while keeping a wary eye out for trouble along the way. The massive orc templar was bareheaded now, clad in the robes and sandals of his order rather than the full plate armor and helm of his younger days. He had been just Frump then, and later Major Frump and finally just Frump once more. A healing staff was slung across his back in place of the greatsword that had separated many a foe from its head.

Friar Frump sat on a suitable size rock a little off the road, wiping the sweat from his brow and the bald head of his tonsure. He had managed to avoid enemies so far this morning, for which he was thankful, but the situation at the fort and dolmen would be different. He would heal and protect as best he could and leave the killing for others. Thirty years in the king's army and thirteen more as a mercenary had more than quenched his appetite for blood.

After prayer and a draught from his water skin, he pushed himself up with his staff and continued on his way.

Friar Frump isn't real, yet in a way he is. Because Friar Frump is in me, in my head, and I am in him. I am also in Basemath, a raven haired, undead, teenaged necromancer and she *is* a killer. They should not have broken into her crypt and disturbed her long sleep, for she had been sealed in there for a reason. They paid and now many others would pay.

Friar Frump and Basemath are two of several characters that I play, or have played, in the game world of Elder Scrolls Online. In Fallout 76, I am Old John Dirt, a fifty something war veteran with a cowboy hat and a burn scar covering half his face. I have played many others, of all descriptions, in many game worlds down the years but they all have one thing in common. They are avatars; pixilated characters on the screen of your choice or your VR (virtual reality) headset and in conjunction with your brain. In the near future they may actually be "in" your brain and, for all practical purposes, transport you into another realm.

When I am role playing Friar Frump, and I am "in" him and he in me, he appears on the screen before me and also on the screen of my daughter in another part of town, the screens (and heads) of random guildmates and random players around the country and sometimes in other parts of the world. He "exists" in the files and components of personal systems and server banks, coming and going through waves, wires and cables in the ground, under water, in the air and in space. And in minds, mine and others.

But what has all this to do with Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, and with his Father and the Spirit, the Trinity, God in three Persons?

Especially since the Enlightenment (which has served to both enlighten and darken the minds of many) it has been thought sophisticated to regard God and Christianity as just another superstitious relic from humanity's childhood, its ignorant past.

Christianity holds that God is and was and always will be, without beginning or end. He is an eternally self-existing entity consisting of three persons who are of one essence and one mind. He is the creator and sustainer of the cosmos and in no way dependent upon it. Science speculates a similar thing about a self-generating and evolving cosmos, which may consist of one universe or many and may or may not possess intelligence of some nature. Measured by the scientific knowledge, expertise and standards of our present day, neither concept is provable or unprovable. Both are faith positions, whether their adherents acknowledge it or not. Strictly speaking, the human race has neither the collective brain power nor the gear to dismiss God from the picture. But that doesn't keep it from trying.

The eminent scientist and expounder of science, Carl Sagan, pronounced at the beginning of his renowned Cosmos series that, "The Cosmos is all that is or was or ever will be." Such was his belief, his faith statement, without an ounce of scientific evidence to back it up. Sagan called

science a "candle in the dark" and, used intelligently, it is. But there are those who hold the candle at arm's length, peer into the darkness beyond the little circle of light and confidently declare what is, and what is not, out there.

Albert Einstein was not so bold. He once asked his physics students how much of reality that they thought the human race collectively possessed. They put their heads together and, to their credit, came up with a little less than two percent. The great physicist said that he would accept that as an answer but thought that the figure was too high.

Do some deep diving into science, into Physics and Cosmology and the like, and you will see that it is always and ever a work in progress; establishing, modifying and retracting facts along the way in the never-ending pursuit of reality-as-it-is.

Science is necessarily handicapped in that it can only legitimately accept what it can "see" at the moment as being "real". No microscope, no germs --- of course they couldn't exist or so went the truth of the day, doctors routinely making their hospital rounds, going from patient to patient without bothering to wash their hands in between. A thick, "up to date at the time" science book that my parents had in our home revealed our very own Milky Way as the only galaxy in existence, rather than the numberless galaxies known to the field of astronomy today. No Pluto either, planet or otherwise. Dinosaurs depicted as dragging their tails along the ground. Every elementary school child today knows better than that.

Christianity holds that everything that is, was or ever will be exists within God the Father, within his mind. God the Spirit and the God the Son coexist with him from eternity. The Apostle Paul, quoting the Cretan philosopher Epimenides, argued "For in him we live and move and have our being." Speaking through the prophet Jeremiah, God declared, "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" He is Creator separate from his creation. He could will the cosmos out of existence and still remain. The concept that the cosmos or any part of it is part of God is totally alien to Christian doctrine.

God the Father is spirit, a reality currently out of reach of our best knowledge. Jesus told a woman at a well in ancient Samaria that "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." Considering the fact that our still primitive science can only account for roughly five percent of the mass-energy content of the cosmos while so-called dark matter and dark energy account for the other ninety-five percent, it is naive to dismiss the concept of a spiritual reality, unprovable though it may be at the moment, as mere superstition.

Let's not be tripped up by the concept of one God eternally coexisting in three Persons, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Son and Spirit are not mere extensions of the Father, but are Persons in their own right. All are continually present and in communication with one another. God stoops to accommodate himself, to make himself known, to the very small child that humanity is within a vast cosmos that may very well contain many other beings of greater or lesser intelligence. Since all of creation exists within the mind of God, God the Father cannot be "seen". To a certain

extent, God may be known through the creation itself, regardless of the fact that portions of it at least are broken. This is called general revelation. It is the Father, working through the Spirit and the Son, who not only created and sustains the cosmos but seeks to reveal himself to and establish a personal, family relationship with his children, wherever within his creation they may be. And this we label special revelation.

Let's not be tripped up either by the creation accounts portrayed in the early chapters of the Bible. All the libraries and server banks in the world could not contain the historical and scientific data that has been simplified into a story that even a child can understand and presented to a long ago family of people still very much childlike in its knowledge and understanding.

In spite of objections to the contrary, Christian and otherwise, the universe in which we find ourselves appears to have originated from a point roughly 13.8 billion years ago, measured by our timescale, and continues to expand and evolve. Our solar system, Sun and planets, including planet Earth, is measured at roughly 4.54 billion years.

The facts as to how life arose and developed on this planet are sketchy at best, regardless of what science and/or religion may presume and present. The recent reality of humankind's ability to modify and even create life forms serves to give our "solid opinions" pause. And we're just getting started. We cannot put our finger on how a (proposed for the argument) Creator planned and created, on what may have arisen and developed on its own and on what factors and actors were involved initially and down the line. In case you are wondering, my own position (always open to modification and correction) is that of theistic evolution with modification; that is to say that God is the initial creator and allows the cosmos to evolve or unpack, largely by design, but can step in at any moment to do whatever he so chooses.

Imagine, if you will, our far descendants discovering a habitable planet somewhere out there among the stars. Some life forms are tinkered with; we introduce a few of our own and go our merry way. Millions of years later, some group of alien scientists takes it upon themselves to declare how, when and why things are as they are on this world.

Human beings, *Homo sapiens sapiens* (yes, that is correct), are, as to physical form, a mammalian species of primates most closely related to earlier, now extinct branches of the anatomical "family tree". Over long spans of time, with their large brains, increasingly complex forms of communication and opposable thumbs, they developed into rather clever creatures. Chimpanzees are the closest primate match living today, and in spite of possessing a nearly 99% DNA match to humans are light years apart in intelligence.

But then, a relatively short time ago in earth's history, something happened to exponentially kick human intelligence into a higher gear. The super simplified account in the Bible relates that a human couple possessing superior intelligence and a conditional immortality were placed within an enclosed colony of pristine environment, with the duty to procreate, fill the earth and tame it. Their physical bodies were formed from the elements of the planet they were to occupy, the

exact method not given. We can speculate direct creation or a germline taken from the preexisting human population and modified. In either case, both those within and without the colony were sexually and genetically compatible.

God could have populated the cosmos with intelligent beings without the capacity to disobey him; they would be "bots" of one form or another and they would have their place in the order of things but they would not be children in the full sense of the word. God desired children to share the cosmos that he had created, but children must be endowed with genuine free will. The humanoid population groups outside of the colony did not have that ability, but were driven by their primitive, innate natures.

The prototype couple, Adam and Eve in the Bible, were created with free will, God centered and conditionally immortal. God was at the center, self and all else at the peripheral. Despite being instructed beforehand what the result of disobedience would be they allowed themselves to be seduced by a spiritual class being of high order before producing their first child and were sucked into its rebellion with the result that the core of their spiritual being was flipped. Self was now at the center, God and all else at the peripheral with death, physical and spiritual, the end result. This is the essence of the Fall as portrayed in the Bible. Exiled from the birthing colony, the pair's descendents interbred with the planet's unmodified inhabitants and in short order the physical and intellectual enhancements diluted away. It would seem that God had been outmaneuvered, but that is not the end of the story.

Although God the Father is minutely and intimately aware of every aspect of the cosmos, past, present and future (insofar as he has established it) he cannot "go" anywhere within it because the cosmos is in him. God the Spirit and God the Son can do just that. Here is a rather crude but hopefully helpful analogy. I did not create the game world of Elder Scrolls Online and I cannot "go" there in the flesh. But, as Friar Frump, I can. I can go where I want. I can get stuff. I can make things happen and things happen to me, good and bad. I can relate to others, real or imaginary. Now, I'm not implying that the cosmos is a game world but check it out; as far as science can determine, it is constructed of and powered by code.

In the world of ancient human history, things were a hot mess. Chaos reigned supreme. The planet that God had intended to put in good order was a no man's land of catastrophe, disease and death. The human inhabitants, conjoined with rebels of a spiritual order, forgot the Creator of reality and worshipped a fantasy card deck of phony gods and goddesses to no good end.

But God had intentions. Around 2150 BCE, he chose Abram ben Terah, a wealthy inhabitant of Ur of the Sumerians in what is now Iraq, and called him to leave his country and his father's household and travel to the land of Canaan. Promising to give a significant portion of the land to him and his descendants, he would change his name to Abraham and declare that he would make him, although elderly and childless at the time, the father of many nations.

And so it came to be; Abraham would become the forefather of the Israelites, Edomites and a number of the Arabic peoples. Following a lengthy sojourn in Egypt, the Israelites would go on to occupy the portion of Canaan that God had promised to Abraham and which became the nation of Israel. This small stretch of territory in the Middle East, bordered on the west by the Mediterranean and rather insignificant in and of itself, lay between the major world powers of antiquity. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome and lesser kingdoms passed through it on their way to trade and to war and therefore sought to control it for their own interests. It was the perfect place and time span in history to execute a plan.

The history of all the above, as recorded in the Bible is fascinating. When the prototype couple of the birthing colony fell in with a spiritual arch rebel and were expelled into the broken world outside, God made a promise that one of their descendants would defeat the enemy and bring the rebellion to a close. That descendant is Jesus of Nazareth, God the Son, melding with human flesh and changing the outcome forever.

To reiterate what I said earlier, Creator God exists from eternity as three persons of one essence and one mind. As God the Father, he cannot "go" anywhere within his creation although he is intimately connected with his creation because creation exists in him. Nothing exists outside of God; that is an absurdity for there is no "outside" in which it could exist.

God the Spirit can and does act anywhere within creation at any time. He can be in any or all places simultaneously as, in conjunction with the Father and the Son, the Triune God sees fit. He inspired God's prophets of old and, since the return of God the Son, Jesus Christ, to the Father, indwells God's earthly children.

The prototype couple who God had intended to multiply and use to bring Earth into good order were not intended to die, physically or spiritually, nor were their offspring. But they had sinned in direct disobedience to God, disfiguring the core of their being, and die they would; it was inevitable. The humanoid population that they interbred with had not sinned for they had not been given a directive from God nor were they capable of obeying it; nonetheless, they were subject to death as are all life forms native to this planet. God could have chosen to wipe the earth clean of its mongrel population and chose not to. He did destroy a significant portion of it through a major catastrophe, the record of which is not only recorded in simplified form in the Bible but in many other legends passed down through population groups worldwide.

The Triune God works in his own time and in his own way, utilizing planning and methods far above primitive human understanding. We possess what we have been given through his word in the Old Testament (or First testament as it is coming to be called) and in the New Testament. And, through science and technology, we are slowly but surely coming to grasp the intricacies of his work.

Since the proto couple's disfigurement and it's likewise corrupted offspring's interbreeding with the existing primitive population, the human race has been in a physical and spiritual death loop.

If Adam and Eve had not fallen, they would have grown and matured in obedience to God into an eternal state of being far beyond any threat of death or corruption. In crude game terminology, they would have completed the tutorial and leveled up, but no. Was it game over for the inhabitants of planet Earth? For some it was and for some it is but that complicated mystery can best be the subject of another article.

As civilization advances (I can hardly say matures), one of the major obstacles to belief, aside from belief in God himself, is how an eternal God can possibly enter human form and walk the earth. In the Old or First Testament there are a number of examples of God appearing in visible form apart from examples of angelic agents; these are called theophanies. He communicated with Adam and Eve in the Eden colony. He, along with two angels, appeared to Abraham as they headed to the corrupt city of Sodom and not only talked with him face to face but shared a meal. He called Moses from within a burning bush, commissioned him to lead the enslaved Israelite population out of Egypt and spoke with him face to face on their journey to the land promised to Abraham. He appeared as a man to Gideon and directed him to deliver the Israelites from the hand of the Midianites and to the parents of Samson in promising them a son to deliver Israel from the Philistines. It has long been acknowledged that these are temporary manifestations of God the Son, the preincarnate Christ, and can rightly be referred to as avatars. The Bible makes it clear that God the Son, in conjunction with the Father and the Spirit, was not only the active agent in bringing about and sustaining the cosmos but able to personally work within it. Designers and programmers of any game world can enter into their own creation in a super primitive imitation of reality-as-it-is. Am I suggesting that we are living within a simulation? No, although the concept has been seriously proposed more than once, but do you see the similarity?

Seduced by an angelic arch rebel, Adam and Eve had fallen and caused the newly minted race to be nipped in the bud. Very well, God would take full responsibility upon himself for baking free will into the equation

and start afresh in bringing children of eternity to the birth. There are a number of references in the Old or First Testament beyond God's promise to Eve that indicate a personal, future coming of God the Son in the flesh to deal with the situation. Many are cryptic, some more clear. The few quotations below are from the NIV version, published by Zondervan.



**Isaiah 9: 6,7** 8th century BCE "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this." The prophet Isaiah is obviously referring to one more than a man.

**Micah 5:2** 8th century BCE. "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times". Ancient times equates to days of eternity, meaning from before the beginning of creation.

**Daniel 7: 13,14** 6th century BCE, although this early date is disputed. Some place it in the 2nd century BCE. "In my vision at night I looked, and there was before me one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." The book of Daniel is an example of highly symbolic apocalyptic literature, as is the New Testament Book of Revelation.

**Psalms 22 and Isaiah 53** Stunning prophecies of the crucifixion and resulting victory of Christ and their meaning written many hundreds of years before the events.

The New Testament can be read through in its entirety in short order. The combined and greatly condensed history of the birth, three year ministry, trial, crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, God the Son melded with human flesh, is recorded in the accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Matthew and John were two of Jesus' original twelve disciples. Mark was a protégé of original disciple Simon Peter. Luke the physician and historian gathered firsthand accounts of original and later disciples, accounts of those who knew them and very probably Jesus' mother and other family members. Luke also follows up his gospel with a short history of the early church, including the conversion and traveling ministry of former arch-enemy of Christians, Saul of Tarsus, better known as the Apostle Paul. Letters to the early church, written by original disciples John and Peter, Jesus' brothers James and Jude, the Apostle Paul and an unknown author of the book of Hebrews, possibly Paul, make up the balance of the New Testament, with the apocalyptic prophesy, Revelation, closing it out.

The Bible, taken as a whole, makes clear that the only way for the plight of the human race, undone at Eden, to be restored to wholeness and immortality was for God the Son himself to take human form, resist the temptations and attacks of the arch rebel and his minions and walk in total obedience to God his Father. He must succeed where our proto pair failed. He is called the second or last Adam.

And succeed he did. He accomplished exactly what he had foretold in advance, that he would be tried, crucified, die, be buried and restored to life on the third day. Jesus died, the just for the unjust, to take the penalty of disobedience off of the hapless humans who believe in him and own him and take it upon himself. This divine transaction comes with an iron clad guarantee, that those whom the Son of God has redeemed, his life for theirs, will live with him for eternity. They are sealed with God the Spirit to begin the transformation of their eternal natures and that is the redeemed human nature which will enter at bodily death into the very presence of God, the husk of their old natures, ever a troublesome burden, having been stripped off at death and discarded like a worn out set of clothes.

All that the enemies of God, human and demonic, accomplished was to set the stage of their own defeat. The prophets of old proclaimed and Jesus reiterated God's total victory at the cross. Jesus proclaimed in advance exactly what would transpire and carried it out to the letter. As the so named second Adam, and with Adam's conditional immortality, he succeeded where Adam had failed. His wounds from the vicious scourging and the nails of the cross did not kill him. He had made it clear beforehand that no one would take his life, but that he had the power, given him by the Father, to lay it down of his own accord and the power to take it back again. When the full penalty of human sin had been taken upon himself, he declared that it was finished and released his spirit. At that moment there was an earthquake and the heavy veil of the Temple, which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, and into which the Jewish high priest could only enter once a year on the Day of Atonement carrying with him the blood of the sacrificial offerings, was torn in two from top to bottom. The old symbolic system, merely a shadow of things to come, was finished. Jesus himself had become, for all eternity, the sacrificial offering, the redeemer, and it was more than enough.

Believe it or not, your choice, that wasn't too hard a concept to grasp was it? Jesus Christ, God the Son, fully God and fully man, more than an avatar.

You're not going to be around here long, so who and what do you want to pin your hopes on? Spoiler alert: Here are a few non-starters.

Not the false "prophet" whose followers rampaged across the Middle East, North Africa and Southern Europe, murdering, raping, and enslaving the populace and who hold these and other regions in thrall to this day.

Not the tail chasing, self absorbed path to "enlightenment" offered up by the gurus of Hinduism and Buddhism that has left countries and regions under its spell in darkness, ignorance and poverty.

Not the "old gods and goddesses" of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and the Americas who were as phony as their counterparts in your favorite video game but, made to sing and dance by their demonic puppet masters and the corrupted minds of their followers, reveled in lustful fertility rites and human sacrifice.

Not the shroom poppers, acid droppers, tarot casters, spell casters, crystal ball gazers, palm readers, psychics, channelers, astrologers, science fiction cultists and all of their various and sundry tripping gaily along in the wrong direction after the pied piper of delusion.

Not the myopic masters of communism who can't see past the end of their foggy glasses but whose robotic "vision" holds billions of poor thralls in its icy, iron grip.

Not the know-it-alls of scientism who spin speculation into "assured fact".

Did I leave anybody out? Sorry.

Who then? Why, the One all others love to hate, of course!

Many modern "scholars", and I use the term loosely, have declared that Jesus never claimed to be the second person of the Godhead appearing in the flesh. That is pure bunk. Below is a list of testimonies from the New Testament, which, in its entirety, declares Jesus to be the eternal Son of God and coequal with the Father.

**Matthew 1:18-25** "This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). (Isaiah 7:14)

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus".

**Matthew 3:13-17** "Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

**Matthew 10:32-33** "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will also disown before my Father in heaven."

**Matthew 11:25-27** "At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

**Matthew 16:13-17, 20** "When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven."

"Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah." (note: this was because the time was not yet right. See also Mark 8:27-30).

**Matthew 16:27** (Jesus speaking of himself, using the title Son of Man, since from his incarnation he was fully human as well as fully deity as the Son of God). "For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done."

**Matthew 17:1-9** "After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters--- one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

**Matthew 17:22-23** "When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life." And the disciples were filled with grief."

**Matthew 20:17-19** "Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the twelve aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"

**Matthew 24:27, 30, 44** (Jesus addressing his disciples) "For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

"Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."

"So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

**Matthew 25:31-33** (From Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats) "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left."

**Matthew 26:39,42, 53-54** ( From Jesus' words in the garden of Gethsemane) "Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

"Do you think that I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must happen in this way?"

**Matthew 26:63, 64** (Jesus answers the high priest in the affirmative) The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

"You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

**Matthew 27:54** (At the site of crucifixion) When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

**Matthew 28:16-20** (The final verses of Matthew, known as The Great Commission) Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

**Mark 1:1** "The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God."

**Mark 1:9-11** "At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

**Mark 1:23-24** "Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--- the Holy One of God!"

**Mark 2:5-12** (see also Luke 5:17-28) "When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.

This amazed everyone and they praised God saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

**Mark 2:27-28** Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

**Mark 3:11-12** "Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him."

**Mark 5:6-8** "When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"

In God's name don't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"

**Mark 8:38** "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulteress and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

**Mark 9:2-9** "After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters---one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead."

**Mark 9:30-32** "They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it."

**Mark 9:36-37** "He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

**Mark 10:32-34** "They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."

**Mark 12:35-37a** "While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:

" 'The Lord said to my Lord;

"Sit at my right hand

until I put your enemies  
under your feet." (Psalm 110:1)  
David himself calls him 'Lord.'  
How then can he be his son?"

**Mark 13:26-27, 32** (Jesus referring to the time of his return) "At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens."  
"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

**Mark 14:61b-62** "Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"  
"I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

**Mark 15:33-38** (note: these verses are often seriously misunderstood as implying that the Father has turned his back on his Son as he carries the sin of the world on the cross. This is not the meaning. Jesus is quoting the first verse of Psalm 22, written by David hundreds of years prior. The psalm is prophecy, not only declaring exactly what is taking place at the cross, but ending in total victory).

"At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*" (which means, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?).

When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink.

"Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

**Luke 1:26-38** "In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendent of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."



"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word of God will ever fail."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her."

**Luke 2:8-14** "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

**Luke 2:23-32** "Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.  
For my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:  
a light of revelation to the Gentiles,  
and the glory of your people Israel."

**Luke 3:21-22** "When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

**Luke 4:33-34** "In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, "Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are---the Holy One of God!"

"Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him."

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