Living Daily in Reality: 6: Reality is in The Creator's Son

Living daily in reality – that's what we're talking about for five minutes each day. Naturally the first question that we've been dealing with is 'what is reality?' And we've answered so far that the only human being that seems to have existed outside this earth – and been conscious of his existence – and therefore of any reality behind what we all see and touch here – is the man known as Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus Christ.

We've discussed the fact that he undoubtedly existed in the first century and we've looked at some of the ancient manuscripts that contain the accounts written and spoken by eye-witnesses. These old documents are older and more numerous than those we have for any of the other well-known classical histories of those days.

When, for instance, we think of Plato's Republic (the basic text for most university philosophy departments), we accept the text on the basis of one manuscript which was written 1200 years after Plato wrote his masterpiece, yet we do not question that we have what Plato wrote. Similarly with Herodotus, Aristotle, and Lucretius whose works are based on 2 to 8 manuscripts all of which were written about 1300 years after the author died. The eye-witness accounts of this man Jesus, on the other hand, are found in more than 4,000 Greek manuscripts some of which were written as early as 125 a.d. – while contemporaries were still alive. So we have no doubt that we are reading what actually happened: there just wasn't the time gap for a legend to develop.

But why do we think he was the only Son of the Creator of the universe and that you and I were made inside him? Why would you think he was the only son of God?

Because he talked like God's son! Even though his earthly father was an ordinary carpenter, he said to his parents once when he was just twelve and they found him in the temple, "Did you not know I would be about my father's business?" His mother, of course, knew her husband had no business in the temple. In a very natural way, he identified himself with God, saying things like, "If you knew me, you would know my Father also"[1] and "He who has seen me has seen the Father also."[2]

Indeed, where prophets like Mohammed avoided claiming a unique kinship with God, this man made it the focal point of his followers with the question, "Who do men say that I am...who do you say that I am?"[3]

Well, probably all of us can think of people who make all kinds of wild claims as long as they will benefit from them; but this man was pointed and blunt about it even when he was on trial for his life about this very question of his identity. He was being tried for his life and the presiding official asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" He replied, "I am; and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."[4]

When I read that as a sceptic, I thought, "That explains it right there - the man was a lunatic. The psych wards are full of crazy people claiming to be anything from Napoleon to God's Son - that's what he was - just another mad demagogue!"

But this man Jesus didn't act like a lunatic! The insane people in psych wards not only make insane claims for themselves, but they act insanely - they produce other symptoms of their mental imbalance. But this man Jesus does not behave as a deranged person; his character does

not have the abnormalities or extremes of a madman. Indeed, the opposite is true. When anyone in the world - whatever their religious or non-religious background - wishes to set forth an example of a perfectly balanced and integrated personality, Jesus of Nazareth is the one who is presented as the model to follow. "His zeal never degenerated into passion, nor his constancy into obstinacy, nor his benevolence into weakness, nor his tenderness into sentimentality. His unworldliness was free from indifference and unsociability or undue familiarity; his self-denial from moroseness; his temperance from austerity." Such are the opinions of most of the behavioral experts of our time. If this man was a lunatic, then all of us are hopelessly insane. As C. S. Lewis pointed out, "No one has yet explained how such deep, moral teaching could come from the lips of a megalomaniac!"

Perhaps Jesus was simply a con man, a simple liar! Maybe he knew he wasn't God but deliberately deceived his hearers about his true identity in order to lend authority to his preaching. But he is universally regarded as the teacher of the highest ethical ideals the world has ever seen; moreover, his life is looked upon as the outstanding example of a perfect, faultless example of his teaching. If he is a liar, then the whole world of logic crumbles in our hands, and our ability to make even the simplest observations with our five senses becomes questionable. It is nonsense to say that the greatest moral teacher and example the world has ever seen -- lied -- about the focal point of all his teaching -- his own identity! If Jesus was a liar, then the world is a "tale told by an idiot."

Or is reality that he is the only Son of our Maker and that you and I were created inside him?