SUPERHUMAN LIFE (7)

HAS THERE EVER BEEN A SUPERHUMAN LIFE?

By Ernest O'Neill

What lies behind all this life that we see around us? Plant life, human life, animal life, emotional life--is there any kind of super life that brought all this into being? We've answered "yes." Not only have we the circumstantial evidence of order and design in nature and human nature that some intelligence lies behind the universe, but we also have first-class historical evidence that a being who seemed more than human lived on this planet about 1960 years ago.

This is the man known as Jesus of Nazareth--capable of making sick people well, controlling the powers of nature, and breaking the death-barrier. Not only is he recognized by humanity as the foremost ethical teacher the world has ever known, but he himself said he was directly related to the Creator of the world. Surely such a man must be a lunatic to make that kind of claim! But his life did not show the imbalance of a lunatic--indeed he is usually respected as the example of a perfectly integrated personality. Then perhaps he was a liar! But we face a logical impossibility here. How can the greatest ethical teacher the world has ever seen lie about the focal point of his teaching his own identity? Moreover, wherever he has been followed and not merely talked about he has introduced honesty and integrity into people's lives.

Was He a Legend?

Perhaps he was just a good man who was lionized by his follower after his death? That happened to Buddha. Nothing is written about him for 500 years after his death. Then all kinds of

legends were circulated about him which by then could not be proven or disproven.

That, of course, is part of the difficulty for this theory in regard to Jesus. Legend takes time to develop. All the people who saw Kennedy shot in 1963 have to be long dead; all contemporary records have to be lost before imaginative stories can gain credence and acceptance. This kind of time does not exist in the case of John Kennedy--and this kind of time did not exist in the case of Jesus of Nazareth.

By 48 A.D. the letter to the Galatians was circulating throughout the then known world. This was a mere 20 years after Jesus was crucified. Anybody trying to create a legend about Kennedy in 1984 would have to face thousands of us who were alive when he was actually killed. It was the same with Jesus--thousands of people who had seen the crucifixion in Jerusalem were alive when accounts of his life (the very ones we have) were already being read and studied. If Jesus is not a lunatic or a liar, and if he is not a legend, there is only one possibility left--He really did exist and live the life that the Bible and other contemporary historical records describe in such detail.

But Was Jesus the Son of God?

Was he more than a remarkable human being? Can he really be the son of God? Not just a son of God the same as other human beings who have a spiritual experience, but the unique Son of God--who existed before the universe was created and has a close kinship relation to God, the creator of the world?

He Acted Like God

Certainly, he is different from others--because he not only spoke like God but he acted like God--that is, he did the kind of

things you would expect the Creator's Son to be able to do. He said quietly to a storm on a lake "be still" and the waves smoothed out and the wind died down. He simply touched the withered skin of a leper and said "be clean" and the man was instantly healed. He had power over death and raised a man called Lazarus from the grave. He was able to change the very make-up of matter so that water was changed into wine in a moment by his word. So, his life is filled with miracles like these which demonstrate the kind of power over nature and disease that you would expect the Maker of the world to have.

What do you think? Was he the Son of God? Let's look at the strongest reasons for believing he was--next month.

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