WHAT IS FAITH?

Was Jesus The Son of the Creator?

by Ernest O'Neill Program 25

Do you think there is a God? Do you think there's a Supreme Being behind the universe? if there was, you would expect him to try to communicate with us in some way, wouldn't you? That's what we're hoping for if there are any creatures in outer space; we believe that they would try to communicate with us. You would think that about a Creator. If there is a Creator, you would think, "Well, surely He'll try to get in touch with us somehow." The fact is that He did and He has. He came to earth about nineteen hundred years ago in the form of His own Son. You remember. that that was the man Jesus of Nazareth. That is the clearest proof we have that there is a God--this man Jesus of Nazareth. Now you may say, "Now wait a minute! I mean, why do you think that Jesus of Nazareth was God, or that He was God's Son?"

Well, there are various reasons for believing that. One is that He talked the same way as we would expect the Son of the Creator to talk. He referred to His Father as the God of the universe. He said, "If you've seen me, you've seen My Father." He said, "When you honor Me, you honor My Father also." You remember when He was pressured even by the interrogators who were threatening Him with death, and they said to Him, "Are You the Son of the Blessed?" He said, "I am, and you will see me coming at the right hand of My Father, the God of the Universe." And, of course, they said, "And why do we need any more testimony? This is enough! This man is blaspheming." So, everybody who met Him knew that He regarded Himself as the Son of the Maker of the world.

What we have been discussing is, of course, the fact that many people claim that. There are all kinds of lunatics in the psych wards who claim that they are Napoleon or they are the Son of God, but the amazing thing about this man is that if He was a lunatic, then He was the most sane lunatic that ever lived because He doesn't have the imbalance or the lack of perspective that the normal psychotic or neurotic has. Indeed, He has lived such an integrated life that most of us point to His life as the picture of the perfect human life. Indeed, even people who don't believe He was the Son of God regard Him as the most perfect, balanced human being that ever lived. So, it is difficult to say that He is a lunatic since He doesn't have the imbalance or the lack of perspective or the lack of proportion or the unreliability or inconsistency emotionally that most lunatics have. He in fact strikes you as a very sane, balanced person.

Well, perhaps He was a liar. Perhaps He simply lied that He was the Son of God in order to gain a great deal of attention. But we face there a logical impossibility, because every philosopher who knows anything about ethics or morals testifies to the fact that the one outstanding human being that ever lived in the world is Jesus of Nazareth. And the greatest ethical and moral teacher that we have in humanly is Jesus of Nazareth.

So there is an almost impossible illogically there, that the greatest moral teacher that the world has ever known should lie about the central part of His whole life -- His own identity. It is simply illogical to believe that. You cannot believe it and still recognize the high degree of His morality in the rest of His life and the elevated ethics that He has taught the world.

Well, perhaps He was a legend. Perhaps He was an ordinary man and His followers simply "gilded the lily" a little. They just added a few frills to try to persuade people that He was the Son of God, because they recognized that that would draw them

more into the realm of fame and renown. Except that legend requires time to form. For instance, legend can form around Buddha because it was years and years after his death that anybody put into writing anything about him. So the people who originally knew him had all died; in fact, several generations had, and no one could remember what he was actually like. Time is required for the formation of a legend.

Now, that time did not exist in relationship to Jesus of Nazareth. For instance, one of the books in the New Testament that refers to His death and some details of His life is the book of Galatians. That book was written in 48 A.D. Now, that book was circulating around the ancient world as early as 48 A.D. Jesus was crucified in 29 A.D., so that was only twenty years later. There were accounts of His life being circulated widely around the people who had lived in Jerusalem at that time. There were many of them who twenty years after His death were perhaps only forty or fifty years of age. And they would have testified that, "No. This is a figment of the imagination. This is a myth! This is a legend! We were alive when we saw this man and we know that He wasn't like that at all." But, in fact, nobody testifies to that. Everybody who was alive at that time agrees that the accounts that circulated the then-known world were correct, and that there was no legend, that this is actual historical detail of this man's life. The only conclusion you can draw if Jesus was not a liar, and was not a lunatic, and was not a legend, is that He was in fact the truth ... that He actually did live and say and do the things that the historical accounts that we have in the New Testament report Him as saying and doing.

The only thing one can conclude is that this Jesus of Nazareth actually is a historical person and that we have to interpret Him according to the account we have of Him. These accounts are among the most historical and reliable accounts of any living person that we possess, certainly beyond anything that we have

for Caesar or Plato or for Homer or any of the other greats of the past. And the only thing that we can conclude is that if Jesus isn't a liar, and He isn't a lunatic, and He isn't a legend, then He actually must have been the Son of the Creator of the world.

Now, why do we say that He was the Son of the Creator of the world? Well, first of all, because His life was absolutely sinless. There is no other life that was sinless like His. Confucius was very conscious of all his faults and he admitted many of them. Mohammed's life was full of acts of vengeance. But Jesus' life is the only one that even His enemies say was absolutely flawless. He even says to them, "Who convicts me of sin?" That's another amazing thing. Most saints are aware of their own inadequacies. But He seemed to realize that He was actually perfect. Yet He was a humble man. He wasn't the kind of boasting individual that you normally attribute to those who claim to be perfect. But He was actually a humble man and yet He had no sense of moral failure nor did those who even criticized Him have any sense of moral failure in Him.

Those who were closest to Him say that He was perfect. You remember that even the centurion who was present when He was killed said, "Surely this man was the Son of God". He had a humanity that was absolutely flawless. These are some of the reasons why we believe this man was the Son of God, and was God actually come here to earth to tell us that He exists.