

What Was Jesus Christ Really Like?

A Study Outline

- I. Having a proper image of Jesus Christ is extremely important to us, because we are admonished to be like Him (I Peter 2:21; I John 2:6). How can we be like Him if we do not really know Him?
- II. Jesus lived life as a flesh and blood human being, and paved the way for us to live in the flesh, being tempted just as we are (Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15)
 - A. Jesus was totally human, not “both God and Man”, as some have suggested, when he lived here on the earth. How else could He have paid the price for our sins unless He had divested Himself of being spirit to become flesh and blood? (John 1:1-2, 14; 16:27-28)
 - B. Jesus’ Father was God the Father directly, while human fathers have descended for many generations from Adam, the son of God who came from the Father. We are all equally as human as Jesus was when He lived on the earth.
 - C. Nowhere do we see that Jesus became spirit before His resurrection except for His temporary transfiguration (Matthew 17:2).
- III. The typical image of Jesus in Catholicism and Protestantism is usually gotten from the pictures we see from the Renaissance Era: a pale, thin, tall young man with very little muscle development and with a sad expression and long, dark hair. He looks sissified, feminine, and weak. Is this an accurate picture of who He really was, or is it a terrible counterfeit put forward by the arch-enemy of Christ, Satan the devil? If Satan can distort the true image of Jesus Christ, then He can mislead mankind much easier than if they have a correct view of that powerful person in both body and character.
 - A. To match the character they thought He portrayed, monks and nuns would hide themselves in monasteries, lash themselves with whips, and wear itchy, uncomfortable garments, claiming to be living like Christ.
 - B. These images fall far short of Jesus Christ’s reality.
- IV. Jesus’ physical appearance
 - A. He was not a handsome man in people’s view, but “He had no form or comeliness, and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him” (Isaiah 53:2).
 - B. He wore a beard like did many of the Israelites in His day: “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair” (Isaiah 50:6).
 - C. His hair, according to tradition, was yellowish or blonde, and we know from the lineage of David and of Israel that many of the Israelites, if not most, were light-haired.
 1. David was *ruddy* (Strong 132, *admoniy* = “reddish (of the hair or complexion”); I Samuel 16:12; 17:42).
 2. David had a “*fair* countenance” (Strong 3303, *yapheh*, from 3302, *yaphah* = “to be bright, by implication beautiful”; I Samuel 17:42). In Song of Solomon 5:10, being ruddy (Strong 132) goes along with being *white* (Strong 6703, *tsach* = “dazzling, i.e., sunny, bright”, from Strong 6705, *tsachach* = “to glare, i.e. be dazzling white”).
 3. The lineage of the Israelites was light skinned and light haired, at least in major part, as evidenced by Laban, the brother of Rebecca and father of Rachel and Leah, who was “white” (*Laban* = Strong 3837, from Strong 3836 = “white”). Sarah was very “*fair*”, as was Rebekah (Strong 3303, see point 2 above, and Strong 2896, *towb*, “good, favorable”).
 4. From a “Letter from Pilate to Tiberius Caesar”, in *The Resurrection Tomb* by E. Raymond Capt: “A young man appeared in Galilee preaching with humble unction, a new law in the

Name of the God that had sent Him. At first I was apprehensive that His design was to stir up the people against the Romans, but my fears were soon dispelled. Jesus of Nazareth spoke rather as a friend of the Romans than of the Jews. One day I observed in the midst of a group of people young man who was leaning against a tree, calmly addressing the multitude. I was told it was Jesus. This I could easily have suspected so great was the difference between Him and those who were listening to Him. His golden colored hair and beard gave to his appearance a celestial aspect. He appeared to be about 30 years of age. Never have I seen a sweeter or more serene countenance. What a contrast between Him and His bearers with their black beards and tawny complexions! Later, I wrote to Jesus requesting an interview with Him at the Praetorium. He came. When the Nazarene made His appearance I was having my morning walk and as I faced Him my feet seemed fastened with an iron hand to the marble pavement and I trembled in every limb as a guilty culprit, though he was calm. For some time I stood admiring this extraordinary Man. There was nothing in Him that was repelling, nor in His character, yet I felt awed in His presence. I told Him that there was a magnetic simplicity about Him and His personality that elevated Him far above the philosophers and teachers of His day.”

5. From *The Archko Volume*, translated McIntosh and Twyman of the Antiquarian Lodge, Genoa, Italy, from manuscripts in Constantinople and the records of the Senatorial Docket taken from the Vatican of Rome (1896): This description of Jesus is from official court documents from the days of the Messiah. This information contends that He came from racial lines which had blue eyes and golden hair. In a chapter entitled "Gamaliel's Interview" the following is said concerning Jesus: "I asked him to describe this person to me, so that I might know him if I should meet him. He said, "If you ever meet him [Yahshua] you will know him. While he is nothing but a man, there is something about him that distinguishes him from every other man. He is the picture of his mother, only he has not her smooth, round face. His hair is a little more golden than hers, though it is as much from sunburn as anything else. He is tall, and his shoulders are a little drooped; his visage is thin and of a swarthy complexion, though this is from exposure. His eyes are large and a soft blue, and rather dull and heavy”
 6. From a description of Jesus Christ written by Publius Lentrelus, a resident of Judea in the reign of Tiberius Caesar, which first appeared in the writings of Saint Anselm of Canterbury (11th Century A.D.: in *The Resurrection Tomb* by E. Raymond Capt: “There lives at this time in Judea a man of singular virtue whose name is Jesus Christ, whom the barbarians esteem as a prophet, but his followers love and adore him as the offspring of the immortal God. He calls back the dead from the graves and heals all sorts of diseases with a word or touch. He is a tall man, well-shaped, and of an amiable and reverend aspect; his hair of a color that can hardly be matched His forehead high, large and imposing; his cheeks without spot or wrinkle, beautiful with a lovely red; his nose and mouth formed with exquisite symmetry; his beard, and of a color suitable to his hair, reaching below his chin and parted in the middle like a fork; his eyes bright blue, clear and serene. His look is innocent, dignified, manly, and mature. In proportion of body most perfect, and captivating; his arms and hands delectable to behold.”
- D. Jesus’ hair could very likely have been close-cropped, as for many of the men in His day. He was not keeping a Nazarite vow, so there was no need to let His hair grow long.
 - E. He was strong and muscular. He grew up as a carpenter’s son (Matthew 13:55), and likely helped his father in the business which required a lot of heavy work. According to Bruce Barton in *The Man Nobody Knows*, “The practice of carpentry was no easy business in those simpler days. Doubtless the man who took the contract for a house assumed responsibilities for digging into

the rough hillside for its foundation, for felling trees in the forest and shaping them with an adz ... Some of them had seen Him bending His strong, clean shoulders to deliver heavy blows, or watched Him trudge away into the woods, His ax over His shoulder, and return at night with a rough-hewn beam.”

1. He “waxed strong in the spirit” as a youth, (Luke 1:80; 2:40), and likely in body as well.
 2. He had no trouble cleansing the temple, overthrowing the tables of the moneychangers and the chairs of the dove sellers, and forcing out the people that bought and sold in the temple (Mark 11:15-17), not a task for a weakling.
 3. He was used to walking long distances on a regular basis, like others at that time (Matthew 4:1; 17:1; Mark 1:16; etc.).
- F. He expressed excellent, radiant health and vitality (John 10:10). He could heal others only if He Himself was superbly healthy (Mark 5:25-34).

V. Jesus’ character and manner

- A. **He exemplified the very Father** who sent Him into the world (John 14:9), which follows from the fact that mankind was made in the express likeness of Elohim (Genesis 1:26-27).
- B. **He had perfect control of every thought and emotion**, even though He lived in the flesh as we do.
 1. He was tempted as we are, yet He never sinned (Hebrews 4:15).
 2. “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that rules his spirit then he that takes a city” (Proverbs 16:32).
- C. **He is the Word** (John 1:1), and **authored the Scriptures** by inspiring the prophets through the centuries (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21).
- D. **When He spoke He made His words count**, and spoken in parables to encapsulate ideas.
 1. “A fool utters all his mind, but a wise man keeps it in until afterwards” (Proverbs 29:11).
 2. “... therefore let your words be few” (Ecclesiastes 5:2).
 3. The traits of Christ’s language in the parables:
 - a. ***They are wonderfully condensed.*** He used no introductions, used a single sentence to get people’s attention, three or four more sentences to tell the story, and one or two more to complete the thought and its application. Using an example from our own history, two speeches were given at Gettysburg after the Civil War: one took more than two hours, and another contained only 250 words. We remember the second speech, which was Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address but we do not recall the first one.
 - b. ***The language is simple.*** Illustrations are drawn from common experiences of everyday life. He used very few adjectives and usually simple, one-syllable words.
 - c. ***Sincerity shines through every word and sentence.*** He lauded the frankness and humility of little children (Matthew 18:1-5), but He denounced the insincerity of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:25-28).
 - d. ***The ideas were repeated frequently.*** All through the gospels His stories about the Kingdom of God approached from different angles, and the fruits of humility and love were emphasized in many ways. “The thoughts which Jesus had to give the world were revolutionary, but they were few in number. ‘God is your Father’, He said, ‘caring more for the welfare of every one of you than any human father can possible care for his children. His Kingdom is happiness! His rule is love’.... [He told] many stories but the same big Idea” (Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows*).
 4. To get busy people’s attention He would put Himself in the other person’s place, and try to imagine what he was thinking. Of course, Christ could read their thoughts, so this procedure would quickly get people’s attention as with the Samaritan woman at the well (John

4:5-26). His first remark was sincere and honest, but in line with their thoughts, and the next remarks sought agreement until all minds were following the same pathway.

E. He was a very joyful person.

1. Joy is one of the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22).
2. He would laugh with others, and feast with them, and truly enjoy life (Luke 7:33-34).
3. “If a man beget a hundred children and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good ... I say that an untimely birth is better than he” (Ecclesiastes 6:3).
4. Like His Father, He laughed when the rulers of the earth made plans to destroy and vex His people (Psalm 2:1-5).
5. Even to the very end of His physical life, at the last supper, he spoke earnestly with His disciples to lift them up despite the terrible suffering and death He would soon experience. In the face of imminent death He was encouraging them to not worry!
 - a. He would be leaving them, but would return soon, so their sorrow at His death would be turned into joy (John 16:17-24).
 - b. “... be of good cheer ...” (John 16:33).
 - c. “... your joy might be full” (John 15:10-15).

F. Jesus always had perfect composure, and was unruffled. When we are put under severe stress we find out what we are truly made of.

1. He was in command of the situation even when terrible suffering and death were staring Him in the face.
 - a. At Judas', betrayal, he even healed the ear cut off the high priest's servant (John 18:1-11).
 - b. Before Pilate he said nothing (Matthew 27:11-14). A bit later He told Pilate exactly who He was (John 18:33-37).
 - c. Even hanging dying on the stake He counseled one of the criminals hanging beside Him (Luke 23:39-43), and He asked the Father to forgive those who were killing Him (Luke 23:33-34). Bruce Barton in *The Man Nobody Knows* puts it like this: “‘Jesus.’ It was the voice of one of the robbers. ‘Jesus,’ he says painfully, ‘remember me, *when thou comest into thy kingdom.*’ Read that, my friends, and bow you heads. You who have let yourself picture Him as weak, as a man of sorrows, uninspiring, glad to die. There have been many leaders who could call forth enthusiasm when their fortunes ran high. But He, when His enemies had done their worst, so bore Himself that a crucified felon looked into His dying eyes and saluted Him as king.”
2. Talking with enemies, such as the Pharisees, or friends like the apostles, He never was without the proper words.

G. Jesus loved children.

1. “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God” (Mark 10:13-16).
2. He oftentimes used the innocence, lack of hypocrisy, and humility of children as examples of how His disciples ought to live.

H. Jesus was the epitome of humility.

1. Though He, with His Father, created and possess all things, He did not get lifted up and proud.
 - a. All the earth is His (Psalm 33:6).
 - b. He created all things (John 1:1-3).
 - c. He invited the weak and depressed to follow Him (Matthew 11:28-30).
2. Jesus did not lift Himself above even His own disciples (Philippians 2:1-5).

3. As a man of sorrows and well acquainted with suffering (Isaiah 53:3-5), He exemplified the teaching throughout Scripture that “The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth” (Ecclesiastes 7:4).
4. When He performed healings, cast out devils, or declared Himself the Christ he oftentimes admonished the people to tell no one of it (Mark 8:22-30; Luke 8:49-56).
5. Moreover, Jesus refused to allow the people to make Him a king at that time (John 6:11-15).

I. He was a true, selfless servant of those to whom He was sent.

1. To all men (Matthew 20:25-28).
2. To the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24).
3. To serve His Father’s will (John 6:38).

J. Jesus had complete faith in His Father, which gave Him incredible peace of mind.

1. In the midst of a furious windstorm on the Sea of Galilee He was sleeping in a boat with some of his disciples (Mark 4:35-41).
2. At the crucifixion, although He greatly desired to avoid the suffering He was about to endure, He faithfully obeyed the Father’s desire and said, “... nevertheless not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39).

K. He had great empathy and concern for His fellow man. He healed blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52). Bruce Barton in *The Man Nobody Knows* writes about this episode as follows: “To be sure He was not always in the crowd. He had His long hours of withdrawal when, in communion with His Father, He refilled the deep reservoirs of His strength and love. Toward the end He was more preoccupied. He knew months in advance that if He made another journey to Jerusalem His fate would be sealed; yet He never wavered in His decision to make that journey. Starting out on it, His mind filled with the approaching conflict, His shoulders burdened with the whole world’s need, He heard His name called out from the roadside in shrill, unfamiliar tones: ‘Jesus ... Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.’”

It was the voice of a useless blind beggar. At once the disciples were on him, commanding silence. Couldn’t he see the Master was deep in thought? Who was he to interrupt? ... Keep still, blind man ... get back where you belong.

“But frantic hope knows no reserve. It was the poor fellow’s one possible chance. He cared no more for their rebuke than they for his need. Again the shrill, insistent voice: ‘Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.’”

Jesus stopped. ‘Who called my name!’

‘Nobody, Master ... only a blind beggar, a worthless fellow ... Bartimaeus, nobody at all ... we’ll tend to him.’

‘Bring him here.’

Trembling with hope, he was guided forward. The deep rich eyes of the Master looked into those sightless eyes. The mind which had been buried in the greatest problem with which a mind ever wrestled gave itself unreservedly to the problem of one forlorn human life. Here was need, and He had time”

L. Jesus was always in contact with His Father in prayer.

1. He would often go off to a private place to communicate with His Father, even in His youth (Luke 1:80; 5:15-16; Matthew 14:22-23; etc.).
2. He gave instructions for others to pray, in the very pattern that He prayed. Matthew 6:9 to 13 gives the essential framework of daily prayer in only 66 words, and one of the greatest poems of all, Psalm 23, has only 188 words.
3. Long prayers are not always the best. The publican prayed only seven words, and Jesus called it a good one (Luke 18:9-14).
4. The Father would talk with Him directly at times (Matthew 3:17; 17:5), and visible angels

would minister to Him (Matthew 4:11; 22:42-45).

M. **He never worried about public opinion.** Quoting Bruce Baron's paraphrase of Luke 7:31-34, "No man can expect to accomplish anything if he stands in terror of public opinion. People will talk against you no matter how you live or what you do. Look at John the Baptist. He came neither eating nor drinking and they said he had a devil. I came both eating and drinking, and what do they call Me? A wine bibber and a gluttonous man!"

N. **Christ was not afraid to express anger at sin and hypocrisy, and to expose it.** He was continually at odds with the scribes and Pharisees and priests, who had a form of righteousness but inwardly were ravenous wolves (Matthew 23:1-7). Recall His passion when chasing the money changers out of the temple (Matthew 21:12).

VI. *Jesus Christ was (and is) a flesh and blood person like we are, but never sinned. He was the epitome of joyful, peaceful, productive living in the image of our heavenly Father. He was perfectly healthy, such a positive, motivated leader that not even the leaders of the Judeans could contradict Him. He had the Father's truth always as His focus, and never gave in to evil impulses. He was likable and social, laughing with the cheerful and crying with the hurting ... and He was killed by the jealous leaders of the establishment because of His truth and goodness. He is our champion and pace-setter. Let us focus on His lifestyle and live it to the full each moment of each day!*

Some Traditional Pictures of Jesus





