**Study Series: More Than a Carpenter**

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**Lesson Title: “What Makes Jesus So Different?” (pp. 6-16)**

March 7, 2021 Session 01

**The main point of this lesson is:** Jesus is unique among religious figures—He is God!

**Focus on this goal:** To help adults acknowledge that the New Testament presents Jesus as God.

**Key Bible Passage:** John 10:30

**To the Leader:** This teaching plan suggests reading numerous Scripture passages. The objective is not to do an intense study of each passage, but to pull out implications of Jesus’ divinity. Even then, time might not permit you to read each passage. **Prayerfully choose** which verses you will have the group read and discuss, and which you will summarize and explain.

**Before the Session**

**Read and be prepared to summarize** John 5:1-15 (Step 4).

During the Session

**Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion**

**Ask:**

1. How do you feel about apologizing?
2. Why might some Christians be uncomfortable with a theological discipline called “apologetics?”

**Explain** the Greek term “apologia” refers to a speech of defense. Apologetics is not apologizing for our faith in Christ; rather it is making a defense of our faith. Many Christians don’t feel confident about defending their faith because they’ve bought into this world’s claims that their faith won’t stand up to serious investigation and rational analysis. They think they must choose between their faith and God-given mind. This study emphasizes the Christian faith is not unreasonable, illogical, or anti-intellectual.

**Relate** from the introduction (p. 5) how the author accepted the challenge to make an intellectual examination of the claims of Christ in order to prove Christians were wrong.

**Read** the last paragraph of the introduction.

**State:** Today’s lesson examines what makes Jesus so different from every other historical religious figure.

**Step 2. Day One – Unique Jesus**

**Invite responses** to Day One, activity 1 (p. 6).

**Read** the Day One paragraph (p. 7) beginning, “For many people ….”

**Evaluate** what is meant by the claim that Jesus Christ is God.

**Discuss** Day One, activity 2 (p. 7).

**Step 3. Day Two – Proclaimed God**

**Use** the first paragraph of Day Two (p. 8) **to emphasize** that the New Testament clearly presents Jesus Christ as God.

**Note** that Jesus was completely humble and acknowledged God alone deserved worship, yet He did not rebuke others when they worshiped Him.

**Encourage** learners to identify people in the New Testament who claimed Jesus was God (consulting Day Two, pp. 8-9, if desired).

**Analyze** why their claims are worth believing.

**Explain** devout monotheistic Jews such as Paul would be highly unlikely to attribute deity to a mere man.

**Discuss** Day Two, activity 1 (pp. 8-9).

**Ask:**

1. If there were any people who might logically doubt the deity of Jesus, why might it have been the ones who spent the most time with Him?
2. Yet what did Jesus’ disciples and closest friends declare about Him?
3. What was it about Jesus that could compel devout Jews and people who spent day after day with Him to declare He was God?

**Draw attention** to Day Two, activity 2 (p. 9) and **urge** anyone who would like to know more about putting their faith in Jesus to talk with you after the session.

**Step 4. Day Three – Personal Claims**

**Read and discuss** the Day Three margin/pull quote (p. 10).

**Summarize** John 5:1-15.

**Invite a volunteer to read** John 5:16-18.

**Analyze** how Jesus was making Himself equal with God, **using** the Day Three remarks (pp. 10-11) to add to the discussion.

**Explain** from the CSB Study Bible, “Jewish rabbis agreed that God continually upheld the universe, yet without breaking the Sabbath. If God was above Sabbath regulations, so was Jesus” (p. 1676).

**Ask a volunteer to read** John 5:19-23.

**Determine** additional ways Jesus made Himself equal with God.

**Discuss** Day Three, activity 1 (p. 11).

**Invite a volunteer to read** John 10:24-33.

**Ask:**

1. Do you think the Jewish leaders were sincere in wanting to know if Jesus was the Christ?
2. What leads you to that conclusion?
3. What did Jesus claim about Himself in His response to them?
4. How would you describe the Jews’ response to Him?

**Invite responses** to Day Three, activity 2 (p. 11).

**Step 5. Day Four – Forgiving Sin**

**Relate** the author’s experience with a professor who asserted Mark’s Gospel never mentions Jesus’ claim to be God (p 12).

**Discuss** Day Four, activity 1 (p. 12), **using** Day Four remarks and activity 2 (p. 13) to add to the discussion.

**Step 6. Day Five – His Trial**

**Ask:** What did Jesus have to gain and to lose by claiming to be God?

**Assert** it was Jesus’ claim to be God that led to His arrest. Yet, while on trial for His life, Jesus continued to affirm that claim.

**Direct a volunteer to read** Mark 14:60-64.

**Ask:** Why do you think the Jewish leaders got so angry when Jesus called Himself the Son of Man—wasn’t that a reference to His humanity?

**Discuss** Day Five, activity 1 (p. 14).

**Direct a volunteer to read** the Day Five paragraph (p. 15) beginning with “An analysis of Christ’s testimony ….”

**Discuss** Day Five, activity 2 (p. 16).

**Step 7. Practical Application - Live Out the Lesson**

**Read** the Day Five margin/pull quote (p. 15).

**Ask:** What alternatives does every person face when confronted with Jesus’ claim to be God?

**Invite learners to recall** (**or consult** Matt. 16:17) how Jesus responded when Peter declared He was the Christ and Son of the living God.

**Declare:** If we are struggling to believe Jesus Christ really is God in the flesh, or if we know someone who cannot or will not believe that truth, we can pray that God will clearly reveal that truth.

**Close in prayer.**