

Lesson 1

Jesus Christ, True God

Bible Lesson: Matthew 8:5-13

Memory Verse: By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. *1 John 4:9*

Enrichment Memory Verse: And behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." *Matthew 3:17*

Catechism Memory Work: And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, . . .

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach:

- ✠ See the power and authority of Jesus as revealed in the Bible text, and will worship Jesus as his God and Lord.
- ✠ Be reverent in his attitude to Jesus, to God the Father, His Word, His messengers and His house.
- ✠ Recognize his own need for the work of God and recognize the power of Jesus to work in his own life. He will allow Christ to work faith and holiness in his life.

Prepare Materials:

Along with the regular materials needed for class, you will need the following items for this lesson:

- ◆ Pictures illustrating some of Jesus' miracles
- ◆ pictures of the symbol representing Jesus, God's Son, our Redeemer from student book cover

Prayer Preparation

1. Pray that, during this study of the Second Article, you will be led to a deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ your Savior in His Godhood and also in His Manhood.
2. Pray that this personal knowledge and trust will enable you to share Jesus with your pupils and lead them to faith.
3. Pray for your pupils as they study this Second Article. Pray that they may see Him as He is and yield their hearts in living faith and trust.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

A. Bible Study

The Old Testament is filled with promises of the One who was to come and "bruise" the head of Satan. These promises begin immediately after sin has entered the world in Genesis 3. The first is given in Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise Him on the heel." God's promises are repeated through the prophets who make clear that God Himself will be the Savior and Redeemer (eg. Isaiah 41:14, 43:1, 45:21).

History records fight after fight over teachings about Christ's nature. How can it be that God is Father and Son at the same time? How is it that Jesus is the Son of God and God at the same time? Conceived by the Holy Spirit?

When we turn to the New Testament we see that Jesus Christ is the Promised Messiah. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ answers the question of how the Savior can be God and also the descendant of Eve who crushes the serpent's head.

The 2nd Article describes Jesus' work of redemption. Jesus is the Only Begotten Son of God. These words "only begotten" or "only son" remind us of the picture of Gen. 22 in which God sends Abraham to sacrifice his Son Isaac. Jesus, the Son of God is sacrificed though. Ezekiel 34 makes clear that God cares for His people and

is personally at work in seeking out and saving His people. God is the Rescuer, the Savior. Jesus, true God, has redeemed us. The price has been paid by God Himself.

In the Creed, this description of Christ's activity begins by describing how he took on flesh. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that God the Father had some physical relationship with Mary as the Mormons teach. The Savior began His life in the womb of Mary just as each of us began our lives. He was, thereby, giving dignity to life, even at the earliest stages of development; at the beginning. Being conceived by the Holy Spirit means that His human nature was not corrupted by original sin. The Apostle Paul is careful in Romans to communicate that Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh. In this way Paul makes clear that Jesus was not sinful (Heb. 4:15) but it was flesh that Jesus took on (John 1:1, 14).

Jesus Christ, true God, did this as a payment for our sins. The sinless died for the sinful as Paul says, "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3). He who is true God humbled Himself "by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:7). For us.

The early Christian church formulated the Second Article of the Creed for the purpose of confessing the truth about the Savior Jesus Christ. Luther's explanation provides for us a tool in passing down to later generations the Biblical truth and teaching about Jesus Christ the Only Begotten Son of God conceived by the Holy Spirit.

B. Creed Study

A creed is a statement of what Christians believe. In the First Article of the Apostles' Creed we say we "believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." Not everyone who says he believes in God is a Christian, however. A Christian also believes that God has come to earth in the flesh as a man (John 1:14; I John 4:2). This "God-Man" was Jesus, the Son of God. The Second Article of the Creed goes on to say "I believe in Jesus Christ." To say "I believe" in Jesus Christ should also mean that "Trusting in Jesus Christ with all my heart, I surrender myself to Him as my only Savior from sin, and death, and the power of Satan." (Catechism #149)

The Person of Christ--Who He Is

"I believe in Jesus" means there was such a man who lived on earth about 2,000 years ago. His mother's name was Mary, He grew up in Nazareth, etc. An angel told Joseph to call His name Jesus, "for it is He who will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Jesus is His given name, and it means "savior."

"I believe in Jesus Christ" increases the meaning of what we are saying. "Christ" means the anointed one, or "Messiah." It is more of a title, such as "Jesus, the Christ." Peter confessed Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). It is this Jesus Christ upon Whom the Church is built (16:18), and Who went to the cross and Who died and rose again (16:21).

Believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, means that we believe He is also the Savior of the world. It was Athanasius (b. 296 AD) who saw the crucial link between the incarnate Son of God and the redemption and salvation of man. Athanasius participated in the Council of Nicea in 325, which was called to refute the teachings of Arius who denied the deity of Jesus, arguing that He was only a created being. This teaching is similar to that of the modern Jehovah's Witnesses. The Council of Nicea declared Jesus to be "very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance (essence) with the Father." (see Nicene Creed)

Athanasius also taught that the members of the Trinity are coequal and coeternal, thus linking the doctrine of the Trinity and salvation. He taught from Scripture that man was created in the image of God but fell in sin and lost that image. A new creation was necessary and only God could be the Savior. The deity of Jesus Christ and the salvation of fallen man are two truths that cannot be separated. It is equally important in our day to clearly teach the deity of Christ if we are to understand the nature of man's sin and of God's saving grace in Christ.

The Power of Christ--What He Can Do

The life of Christ as recorded in Scripture sets Him apart from all other men. He is like us, yet He is different. He lived a perfect life, and no one could convict Him of sin (I John 3:5; John 8:46). He also did mighty works (miracles, signs) which were demonstrations of the power of God at work. No man is perfect (Romans 3:10,23) and no one can do these signs unless His is of God (John 3:2).

The gospel of Matthew is the gospel of the king; the miracles of Jesus demonstrate the power of the king. Why did Jesus perform miracles? One reason is that He wanted to show His compassion and concern for human suffering; He wants to show us that God has power to meet our needs even today. The miracles also are

a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 29:18-10; 35:4-6). Matthew mentions this specifically in the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-17), with reference to Isaiah 53:4.

The main reason for the miracles, however, is that they were Jesus' credentials showing that He is the Christ, the Messiah, whom God has sent to deliver His people. Of course, even Satan can perform "miracles" (II Thessalonians 2:9). But the miracles of Jesus show Him to be the Christ. And furthermore, they were not done merely to entertain people. Jesus performed these signs "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

The miracle of the centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13) demonstrates the power of Jesus and the power of the Word of God. The request: A centurion contacts Jesus, asking Him to heal his servant who is paralyzed and in great pain (8:6). It is interesting that all the centurions mentioned in the New Testament act in an honorable way, in contrast to Jesus' own people, the Jews. The centurions were men of high moral character, possessing a deep sense of duty and a concern for others. This centurion is concerned about a lowly servant and seeks out the best help he can find.

Jesus wants us to know that He is approachable and is our friend, and He wants us, even welcomes us, to come to Him at all times. At the same time, we realize that we are unworthy to come to Him. The centurion humbles himself before Jesus; he does not make any claims based on his military rank or personal merit. He simply lays his trouble before Jesus and leaves it there. In doing so, he acknowledges his own unworthiness, and submits to the power of Jesus' word.

The replies: The conversation between the centurion and Jesus is interesting. Jesus says simply, "I will come and heal him" (8:7). That not only shows His willingness to help in time of need, but that Jesus is willing to go into a Gentile's home and subject Himself to ceremonial uncleanness, a situation similar to God coming to earth to be with sinners.

The centurion had not asked Jesus to come to his home, or even expected it. He has great respect for the authority and power of the word of Christ. He says, "I'm not qualified for you to come into my house; but just say the word and my servant will be healed" (8:8). Such humility removes all barriers for the word of God to work. The centurion was a man of faith, particularly faith in the word of Jesus. It shows how we ought to be men and women of faith, faith in and created by the Word of God. This is seen in his understanding of authority (8:9). He is confident that Jesus need "just say the word" (8:8). This, too, separates Jesus from all other men. He alone has the words of eternal life (John 6:68). The results: One result was a commendation of faith (8:10). Twice in the gospels Jesus marveled at faith. He marveled at the great faith of the Gentiles (the centurion here, 8:10; and the Canaanite woman, Matthew 15:28), and at the great unbelief of the Jews (Mark 6:6).

What makes this faith great? The greatness of his faith is seen---in his humility; he considers himself unworthy. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

2. in his trust in the word of Jesus; this was the very thing Jesus had so much trouble achieving among the Jews, His own people.

3. in his proper view of the exalted person of Jesus; he believes that the word Jesus speaks has power to save his servant from death. That is exactly the kind of faith Jesus wanted to find in the Jews; it is what He wants to find in all of us. Faith in His word is a faith that will save from death; and it is a faith that is itself created by the hearing of His Word (Romans 10:17).

The other result was the obvious one: the servant was healed as Jesus sends the centurion away with great encouragement (8:13). The centurion's faith was in perfect harmony with Jesus' will, and that is why Jesus met that trust as He did. Such faith is a trust that relies on the truth of who Jesus is, not on something we imagine or wish Him to be.

"Let it be done to you as you believed" (8:13), Jesus says. We should not take that to mean that whatever we believe He will automatically grant us, or that the degree or strength of our faith ensures the gift we desire. We must not make "faith" into something in and of itself. It is always a response of trust created by God's word. A wrong faith may be quite strong in expecting a wrong gift. Jesus will not meet that faith simply because it is strong, or seems so to us. He will first correct a wrong faith. And often He will do wonderful things where there is no faith present so that He might produce faith. There is power in the word of God. Jesus does do great and powerful things. But He will not allow us to "use" Him or His power for selfish purposes (Matthew 4:7).

The Personal Christ--What Jesus Means to Me

It is good to learn about Christ, to study His teachings, life and miracles, to hear of His "innocent sufferings and death," etc. But the catechism asks (#198) "Is it sufficient that you know all these things about Christ and

hold them to be true?" The answer: "No; the Holy Spirit must teach me to know Christ in a true and living faith." What is that true and living faith? See question #212.

In studying about Jesus' life and work, remember this: "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost of all" (I Timothy 1:15). There is a warning in this story of power (Matthew 8:11-12). It is given specifically to the unbelieving Jews who were descendants of Abraham and rightful heirs to the kingdom of God. Many of them failed to inherit it because of stubborn unbelief (John 8:37-47), so they were "thrown out" and cast into outer darkness (Matthew 8:12). While the kingdom is still open today to all who will come, let us be sure we do not lose out or are not thrown out because we do not have a true and living faith.

Do we know all these things only? Or do we lay hold of Christ as our only savior from sin and death?

The power and wonder of the miracles must show us the power and wonder of the savior, the Son of the living God, who "by His word" can deliver us from sin and death and gives us eternal life (Romans 6:23; I John 5:11,12).

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome

Talk with students as they arrive. Ask about special things that have happened during the week. Enlist their help in readying the room for class.

Open with Prayer

Thank God for His love and care shown in creating and keeping each one through his life up to now.

Thank God for sending His only Son to be our Savior.

Pray that God will help you and your students to see Jesus as true God and to confess your need and sin and trust in Him as Savior, and to obey Him.

Recite Memory Work

Listen to students recite their memory work:

From the Bible: I John 4:19

And

From the Catechism: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, my eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and all the powers of my soul together with food and clothing, home and family, and all my property; that He daily provides abundantly for all the needs of my life, protects me from all danger, and guards and keeps me from all evil; and that He does this purely out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all of which I am in duty bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

Review

SAY Today we begin a new book. In this book we will learn about the second Person of the triune

God. Who remembers what we mean by "triune God?" Yes, God is one God, but we know Him as three Persons.

ASK Who are the three Persons of the Triune God? (*Yes, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*) In the last book we learned about God, the Father. What word tells of the work of God, the Father? (*Yes, He is the Creator.*) As Creator, what else does the Father do for us? (*He keeps us and everyone and everything in the world, so we can go on living. He protects our souls from sin and death.*)

ASK What is the soul? (*The part of you that will live forever.*)

ASK Why did God create us and take care of us? (*He wants us to have fellowship with Him.*) What is fellowship with God? (*Knowing Him as our Savior, trusting in Him, confessing our sins every day, learning His Word and talking to Him in prayer, letting Him live in our heart and give us power to do His will, etc.*)

SAY Let's recite the First Article together...(Recite.)

Introduce Wall Words

Yahweh—
attributes—
authority—
centurion—
paralyzed—

Introduce the Lesson

Distribute Quarter II student books to the class. Ask the students to look at the cover of the book. **ASK** What do you think we will learn about this quarter? (*The Son, our Redeemer*) Does the symbol on the cover tell you anything about the Son? Who is the Son? Whose Son is He? (*God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Another name He is called is Redeemer. Later on in this book we will learn more about why He is called the Redeemer.*)

For now, we will say that He paid a great price to pay for our sins and bring us back to God.) Why do you think there is a cross in the symbol? (Jesus died on the cross to take away the sin of the world. Whenever we see a cross it reminds us of Jesus bleeding and dying on the cross. The cross is the most well-known symbol of Christianity. There are hundreds of forms of the cross, and the Latin Cross is the form printed on your books.) What does the triangle mean? (God is triune. The Heavenly Father, the Creator; His Son Jesus Christ, our Redeemer; and the Holy Spirit, are the three Persons in the triune God.) Display pictures depicting some of Jesus' miracles.

ASK What is alike or the same about all these pictures? (They all show some miracle that Jesus did. Name some of these miracles.) How could Jesus do such wonderful things? How could He raise people from the dead and feed 5000 people with just a small lunch? (He could do it because He was God's Son.) Because Jesus is the Son of God, He is truly God, just as His Heavenly Father is God. We say that Jesus is true God.

Teach the Lesson

ASK the students to open their books to the beginning of the first lesson. Ask a student to read the title of the lesson. **SAY** Read the second sentence to find out what this lesson book is about.

ASK What is the book about? (The Second Article of the Apostles Creed.) What was the First Article about? (God, the Father, our Creator.)

SAY Read the second and third paragraphs to find out what the Second Article tells us. After the students have read the paragraphs, ask them to tell the things the Second Article teaches about Jesus Christ. (He is God's only Son. He became a man. Mary was His mother. God is His Father. Jesus died on the cross to save us, He is our Redeemer, etc.)

ASK the students to read and tell why Jesus is better than any hero. (Allow the students to list their things.) **ASK** What is the best thing Jesus did? (He died on the cross and rose again. He forgave people their sins.)

SAY All these great things that Jesus did showed how great He was. The next paragraph tells what these great works of Jesus proved to people. Read it and find out. **ASK** What did the miracles prove about Jesus? (He was God. He did things only God

could do, like healing sick people, bringing dead people back to life, etc.)

SAY The next three paragraphs tell about a soldier who bowed down before Jesus, and about what Jesus did for him. Let's read about it from the Bible. Help the students find Matthew 8:5-13.

SAY Listen and follow along in your Bibles as I read the story. **READ** Then **SAY** In verse 5 the soldier is called a centurion. A centurion was an officer in charge of 100 soldiers. He had the authority to give orders to 100 soldiers. What kind of orders did he believe Jesus could give? Verse 8 answers this question...(Jesus could order the sickness to leave a sick man. That was a kind of authority and power much greater than the centurion had. The centurion knew Jesus was much more powerful than he was. The centurion was a Roman soldier but he had great faith in Jesus. Jesus said his faith was greater than He had found in any of the Israelites.)

ASK Did the Roman soldier get what he asked Jesus for? Read the three paragraphs from your student book to find out more about what happened. When the students have read the paragraphs independently, **ASK** What was wrong with the soldier's servant? (He was paralyzed. Because of a sickness he couldn't move at all. He also had pain.) Why didn't the soldier want Jesus to come to his house and heal the servant? (He knew he was a sinner and didn't deserve to have Jesus come to his house.) How did he think Jesus could heal the servant? (He could just give an order for the sickness to leave the servant. He could make the man well without even seeing him. He knew Jesus had that power because God had sent Jesus.) Was the servant healed? (Yes, he became well at the exact time when Jesus said the words, "Your servant is well.")

SAY Let's read the last paragraph aloud together. Read together. **ASK** What question does the lesson ask us here? (It asks if we believe Jesus is the Son of God. Like the Roman soldier, we must bow down before Jesus and tell Him we need Him to be our Savior and forgive our sins.) When He is your Savior and lives in your heart, what will He give you power to do? (He will give power to win over your sins and bad habits. He will help you to obey your parents and to love other people. He can help you in ways no one else can. He is God's Son. His power living in you can help you do what God wants you to do.)

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Memory Work

BIBLE VERSE— I John 4:9

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

CATECHISM—READ the first part of the Second Article from the Student Book.

And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, . . .

Tell the students that the “And” at the beginning of the Article shows it is connected with the First Article, which begins, “I believe in.” “And” here stands for “And I believe in...” Read the section with “And I believe in” instead of “And” alone. This section tells us that Jesus is the only Son of God. He is our Lord who has the right to rule over us.

Activity Pages

Activity 1—The Verse That Tells
ANSWERS

1. 5
2. 6
3. 8
4. 8
5. 13

Activity 2—Jesus Is True God

ANSWERS

1. **EARTH**
2. **BLIND**
3. **MIRACLES**
4. **DIED**
5. **ROSE**
6. **RESTORED**
7. **ALIVE**

E D M E R E R E = **REDEEMER**

CLOSING THE LESSON

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank God that you sent Jesus, your only Son, to be our Savior. We need Jesus to forgive our sins. We believe He died to save us from sin. Live in our hearts and give us power to love You and serve You by loving others and by obeying our parents. Overcome our sins and help us to be holy. Amen.

Assignment

1. Challenge the students to take home their activity sheets and use them to tell someone about the lesson.
2. Remind the students to work on their memory verse and First and Second Articles.