

## **Study Guide: Who is Jesus the Christ?**

1. Even when he was with his disciples, many people had differing ideas of who Jesus was. Even though his disciples finally came to recognize him as the "Messiah" and God's son, they still had trouble recognizing that he was truly God-in-the-flesh. See: Luke 9:20, John 14: 9-11

### **What does Colossians 1:13-20 tell us about who Jesus is?**

2. There are three recurring heresies about the divinity or humanity of Jesus.
  - a. **Arianism** – believes that Jesus and the Holy Spirit were the first things created by God the Father. Currently this is the belief of the **Jehovah's Witnesses**.

This might have come about by Arias misunderstanding that there are two different uses of the word "**firstborn**" (both of which are used in our Colossian's text today). In Colossians 1:18, Jesus is described as "*the beginning, the firstborn from the dead ...* meaning he is the both the first and the most important person of God's new creation. While, Colossians 1:15 describes him as the *firstborn over all creation* (NIV), meaning **the one having preeminence over the family or nation**. See: Psalm 89:27 David, was the last born son of Jesse, but God called him "first born" as king. Since He elected the nation to serve Him, God called Israel His "first born:" Exodus 4:22 (and other places).

### **How would our theology change if we treated Jesus and the Holy Spirit as lesser beings than God the Father?**

- b. **Docetism** believed that God could not suffer or die. Thus Jesus only pretended to be human, and a substitute died on the cross in his place. **Muslims** still believe a variation of this. Though only accepting Jesus as a prophet, not as God, still they think that God put a substitute on the cross in Jesus' place.

**How would this idea alter our concept of salvation being provided through Jesus' sacrifice in our behalf.** (see Romans 5:9, 2 Corinthians 5:15, Hebrews 4:14)

- c. **Pelagianism** believes that the human will did not get corrupted with the fall. Since we still know right from wrong, we have both the ability and the responsibility to choose for or against God – with our lives being a reflection of that choice. Thus we gain or lose salvation by the life we live. This is the basis of a lot of so-called "Christian" thought even today.

**How does this undo the concept of Salvation by grace through faith?** (Ephesians 2:8-9).