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# **What Was Jesus Like?**

## **JOHN 1:1-5, 14**

### **Introduction**

1. The name Archibald Stansfeld Belaney may not be familiar to you.
2. Mr. Belaney was a British-born conservationist, fur trapper, and writer who disguised himself as a Native American, taking the name Grey Owl.
3. As Grey Owl, Mr. Belaney rose to great fame working as a conservationist with Parks Canada, who toured Canada and Britain promoting his books and lecturing about conservation.
4. It wasn't until after his death in 1938 that the truth finally came out as to his true identity.
5. Not everyone is who or what they profess themselves to be, especially when their character does not support their claim.
6. When it comes to Jesus Christ, our conviction is that He is the Son of God.
7. Last week we looked at what Jesus said about Himself.
8. This morning I would like for us to ask ourselves, does His character match His claims.
9. Our goal is to show that Jesus stands in a moral category all by Himself.
10. Jesus once asked a rich young ruler, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone" (Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19).
11. Our response to Jesus' statement should be "Exactly."
12. It isn't that Jesus is better than other men, or even the best of other men.
13. It is that He is good in the absolute sense of the goodness of God.
14. Each of us here today are sinners who suffer from the same problem of sin with which everyone before us has struggled.
15. However, if Jesus was sinless, He was distinct from us — He was above us.

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## I. What Did Jesus Think About Himself?

### A. WHAT HE SAID

1. In John 8:1-11, John tells us about a woman who has been brought to Jesus by “the scribes and Pharisees” (v. 3), after being caught in the very act of adultery.
2. They remind Him, “in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women,” and then ask Jesus, “what then do You say?” (v. 5).
3. They pressed Him for an answer.
4. After a period of silence, He responded, “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her” (John 8:7, NASB95).
5. Later that same day, He would ask, “Which one of you convicts Me of sin?” (John 8:46, NASB95).
6. All of them were sinners, but He was without sin — He lived a life of perfect obedience to His Father.
7. Between these two statements on that day, Jesus also said, “I always do the things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:29, NASB95), speaking of God.

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### B. CONSIDER THE NATURE OF HIS TEACHING

1. In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus tells of two men who went up to the temple to pray — one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector.
  - a. The Pharisee boasted to God of His righteousness (vv. 11-12):

“God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ‘I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’” (Luke 18:11–12, NASB95)
  - b. Jesus didn’t need to draw attention to His righteousness — it was an

obvious fact, made even more plain by His teaching.

2. All others were lost sheep — He was the Good Shepherd who came to seek and save them (cf. John 10:11).
3. All others were sinners — He was the Lamb of God who came to give His life for their sins (cf. John 1:29).
4. All others were stumbling in the darkness of that sin and the ignorance which came with it — He was the light of the world Who came to dispel the darkness in our lives (cf. John 1:4-5, 9).
5. All other men were hungry — He was the “bread of life” (John 6:35).
6. Everyone else was dead in their trespasses and sins — He came to be their life now and their resurrection hereafter (cf. John 11:25).

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### C. WHAT JESUS DIDN'T SAY

1. You never find Jesus confessing His sins or asking for forgiveness, even though He tells His disciples to do so.
2. There is no consciousness of moral failure on His part.
3. He has no feeling of guilt, no sense of estrangement from God.
4. Even though He submitted to John's 'baptism of repentance' (cf. Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3), He did so, not because He was a sinner (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15), but in order to 'fulfill all righteousness' (Matthew 3:13-14).

“ . . . Him who knew no sin to be sin . . . ” (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB95)

“ . . . One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”  
(Hebrews 4:15, NASB95)

5. He had a remarkable consciousness of His own inner purity. Why was this so remarkable?
  - a. It was remarkable because of His keen moral judgment:
    - 1) “He . . . knew what was in man” (John 2:25).
    - 2) He was able to expose the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Matthew 23).

- 3) He despised the vain pretensions of others, but saw no sin in Himself.
- b. His sense of His own inner purity stands in stark contrast to our own experience as Christians.
  - 1) The closer you and I draw to God, the more we each become aware of our own sin.
  - 2) The more Christlike we become, the more we realize the great distance which still separates us from Christ.

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## **II. What Did His Friends Say About Him?**

### **A. WHY SHOULD WE BELIEVE WHAT THEY SAID?**

1. First, they lived in close contact with Jesus for at least three years.
  - a. They traveled with Him, ate together, sailed in the same tiny boat.
  - b. They listened to what He taught, in public and in private.
  - c. Watched what He did, how He treated others, even those from whom others shy away.
  - d. In all this, they never found in Him the sins they saw in themselves.
2. They were Jews who, from their infancy, had been taught the Old Testament scriptures.
  - a. One doctrine they were sure to have learned is the universality of sin:

“There is no one who does good. The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.” (Psalm 14:1–3, NASB95)

“All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.” (Isaiah 53:6, NASB95)

- b. They also knew of the expected Messiah.
3. We can believe their testimony because it is indirect.
  - a. They do not set out to establish the truth of His sinlessness.
  - b. Instead, we find them discussing some other subject when a side reference to His sinlessness is made.

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### **B. THEIR ACTUAL TESTIMONY**

1. Peter
  - a. Described Jesus as “a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Peter 1:19).
  - b. Said of Him that He “committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth” (1 Peter 2:22).
2. John
  - a. When the apostle John writes of us in his first letter, he says that “if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him [God] a liar and His word is not in us” (1 John 1:10, NASB95).
  - b. However, he later states that Jesus “appeared to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5, NASB95).
3. As we have already seen, the apostle Paul tells us that Jesus “knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21).
4. According to the writer of the book of Hebrews,
  - a. Jesus was “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26).
  - b. He was “tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

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### **III. What Did Jesus’ Enemies Concede About Him?**

**A. WHY BELIEVE THEM?**

1. Before we seek to answer the question as to what Jesus' enemies conceded about Him, we must first ask ourselves why we should believe them.
2. The answer to that is that they were not biased in His favor.
3. No, the Gospels tell us they . . .
  - a. "were watching Him closely" in hopes they might find something with which to accuse Him (Mark 3:2).
  - b. "plotted together how they might trap Him in what He said" (Matthew 22:15, NASB95).

**Slide 8****B. THEY CRITICIZED HIM ON AT LEAST FOUR ISSUES**

1. He blasphemed.
  - a. Told the lame man in Capernaum, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:7; cf. Luke 5:20).
  - b. "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God" (John 10:33).

**8a**

2. He associated with sinners (Matthew 11:19; Mark 2:16; Luke 5:30)

**8b**

3. He didn't take His religion seriously enough (Matthew 11:19)
  - a. He was "a glutton and drunkard" (Matthew 11:19).
  - b. He didn't teach His disciples to fast like the disciples of John the Baptist and those of the Pharisees (Mark 2:18).

**8c**

4. He was constantly breaking the Sabbath.
  - a. Healing of man with unclean spirit in the synagogue in Nazareth (Mark 1:21-25).

- b. Healing of man with withered hand (Luke 6:6-11).
- c. Healing of the lame man by the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9).

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## C. THEIR ACCUSATIONS HAD NO FOUNDATION

1. Matthew, in his Gospel, tells us “the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death. They did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward” (Matthew 26:59-60, NASB95).
2. At His trial, the Roman procurator Pilate declared of Jesus three times, “I find no guilt in Him” (John 19:38; 20:4, 6).
3. Herod the Tetrarch could find no fault in Him (cf. Luke 23:15).
4. After betraying Him, Judas, attempted to return the 30 pieces silver with the words, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood” (Matthew 27:4).
5. The penitent thief on the cross rebuked his fellow thief for his abuse against Jesus, adding, “this man has done nothing wrong” (Luke 23:41).
6. Finally, there was the centurion, who, after watching Jesus suffer and die, stated plainly, “certainly this man was innocent” (Luke 23:47).

## Conclusion

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1. Jesus was fully man.
  - a. He grew tired
  - b. He needed to sleep, eat and drink just like any of us.
  - c. He experienced the same human emotions that all of us do: love, joy, anger and sorrow.

### 10a

2. He was no mere man.

- a. As the apostle Paul pointed out, He did not consider His equality with God something to which He must cling.
- b. Instead, He renounced the joys of heaven for the sorrows of earth.
- c. He grew up in the obscure town of Nazareth as the son of a carpenter.
- d. He became a traveling preacher with few possessions and no home.
- e. He was misunderstood and misrepresented.
- f. He was despised and rejected by His own people (*John 1:11*), and deserted by His own friends (*Mark 14:50*).

**10b**

3. Jesus is so far above us:
  - a. He succeeded where we always fail.
  - b. Though mistreated, He never retaliated, but constantly submitted Himself to the will of His Father for our sakes.
  - c. As Paul once wrote in *Romans 15:3*, "For Christ did not please Himself."
4. Such utter disregard of self in the service of God and man is what the Bible calls love.
5. As we often sing, Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.
6. Does such a man draw you to Him?
7. Don't you want to love and serve Him?

**10c**

8. He alone can save you. Will you come to Him today?