

Cliché

(An Interpretive Biography of Jesus' Life and Teachings)

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Assuming the readers' familiarity with this material, this paper does not make many explicit references to the life of **Jesus** and his teaching methods; rather it presents some ideas, as "The *Second Jesus*" approach and emphasis into the Christian faith with the "Sin No More" strategy, to write the relationship of personal interpretation or theology to **Jesus'** teachings. Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from the NIV.



Prologue

As the main symbol of the material of the human body, God himself took the form of men and spread his kingdom and his power and his glory forever to the ends of the earth. God has become claylike. The glory of the Lord is *not* something trite. The idea may become weakened through much repetition, but its teaching is spring water.

It is common sense that people may be bored to death, even in a changing culture, where the idea of submission is already obsolete. Women have developed phobia to this word (submission) and make any effort to overcome a meaning of domination and power which has been retorted to the family's nucleus (1 Peter 3; 1 Timothy 2: 11-15). A dysfunctional employment relationship is based on abuse of power that has corrupted the way of making business and the economy (Colossians 4: 1). Earthly kingdoms (animal, vegetable, and mineral) are also affected for the human being's supremacy with plausible consequences for the environment (Genesis 1: 28). All the structures of our world mirror an antagonism between power and submission to the nth degree, a cause/effect modeling behavior regarding of the subjective and objective criteria of what is right and what is wrong.

The idea of submission being worthy in the life of **Jesus** and his teachings is the main focus in this white paper. It embraces this "biography" of a man who was revealed as God, inspired as God, and incarnated as God to transform us.

Epiphany

The human life of **Jesus** is not the life of God, “for as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself” (John 5: 26). It is the ethical incarnation of God in a human body -- with the free will of a human being -- as a part of a divine master plan. The life of God has neither beginning nor end. “God is Spirit” (John 4: 24). “In the beginning was the Word” (John 1: 1), but that Word was tacit and omnipresent and incomprehensible.

Throughout a plethora of years of creation and dispensation for the normal life’s expectation of a single person, the Word of God incarnated in a blessed young virgin woman through the miracle of the epiphany of God in the world (Matthew 1: 23 quotes Isaiah 7: 14), fulfilling prophesies of the Old Testament led by the Word of God (Isa 61: 1-2; Daniel 7: 13). This leadership’s succession by **Jesus** Christ (Hebrews 1: 1-3) occurred during his 33 years, approximately, in the body and spirit of the “ideal man, fully prepared to live the perfect life” (Luke, NIV), in a historical moment that was divided in BC and AD, according to time and religious tradition.¹

This age is now led by the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11: 13; John 15: 26; Acts 2: 1-4), even though it is also an era recognized for its religious pluralism, where a consciousness of God is the ethical clue for billions of men and women, and the government’s sphere in all nations rises its influence to their lives with a sovereignty over all others spheres created by God as family, church, school, labor, and community.²

¹ See the gospel of Luke “A. *Birth and Preparation of Jesus, The Savior*” (NIV) an introduction from the Trans-denominational Translation Committee, (Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, 1983); for chronological aspects of the life of Jesus see Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown* (Nashville: B&H, 2009), 143.

² *Focus on the Family’s The Truth Project, Lesson 9*, written by Del Tackett, 12 hours, [DVD], 2008.

Anything said about **Jesus** is according to the measure of faith. And it is a God-given experience that praises or disparages in accordance with individual free will. No power in the universe can move human will to the spiritual level without submission to it. Hence Mary's words, "I am the Lord's servant, may it be to me as you have said" (Luke 1: 38) were born from the Spirit of the Son of the Most High God endowed in her human flesh. It was the incarnation of submission.

A prolific parallel of the historical **Jesus** with the post-modern individual is entertaining contemporary scholarship in the world. Everyone interprets **Jesus** in different ways. "As A. Loisy noted long ago, many reconstructions of Jesus appear to be pale reflections of the researcher himself. Feminists discover a feminist Jesus in the Gospels; liberal Protestants tend to find a liberal Jesus; and so forth."³ Let it discover a baby **Jesus** that was born in 5 BC "perhaps the most likely."⁴ As a matter of fact, **Jesus** is being born again and again in every historical, literary, and theological adaptation it has had from then until today, "so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (Luke 1: 4).

The fantasy of worldly wealth is manifested in the visit of the wise men's story. They surrendered in worship to poverty, humility, and the authenticity of the Star that guides them to Israel, with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh (Matthew 2: 1-12). Baby **Jesus** has come to a world where he does not belong, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18: 36). He came from the otherworldly kingdom to a place where he is not welcome at all in the Herod's story (Matthew 2: 1-12). And where he brings for all nations a new kingdom that will never end (Luke 1: 33). In spite of all that, he offered his

³ Kostenberger, Kellum, and Quarles, 125.

⁴ Ibid., 139.

human life as a living sacrifice -- to redeem in revelation and salvation the punishment of the people in the world from their sins.

Innocence is what makes spiritual maturity survive in joy and peace in defiance of the truth that we all need to eat and must die: “My God will meet all your needs” (Philippians 4: 19). Every little child who was murdered in the Bethlehem’s massacre is a testimony of the evil manifestation of a world that kills people’s innocence. When a person stops believing in the goodness of life, ignoring to love others in church and community settings, and his desperation and hopelessness make sense in her expectations and uncertainty, he have lost **Jesus** Christ and his kingdom of heaven, “unless you change and become like little children” again (Matthew 18: 3).

Messianic Consciousness

Jesus at age 12 had entered the temple (the Father’s house) to listen to, ask, and teach the religious’ leaders about the old and new treasures of his heart. His messianic consciousness is burning within him. In obedience, he returned home with his parents, and “his mother treasured all these things in her heart” (Luke 2: 41-52).

Jesus never sinned, but temptation was always there while he grew and became strong in body, mind, and Spirit. The second man -- Adam was first -- who was born without sin has kept his promise of holiness and righteousness to endure the fulfillment of his mission and ministry. At the appropriate time to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3: 15), at age 30, the most likely age, with the baptism of John the Baptist with water, and

the confirmation of God with his Spirit and with fire (Matthew 3:11-17), Jesus was following John's rules and God's divine necessity to prepare for public ministry.⁵

The Ethics of Jesus

Fasting was something Jesus did as persistent prayer during his earthly ministry. "He ate nothing during forty days," and "full of the Holy Spirit" was tempted to surrender to the devil's test (Luke 4: 1-13). He overcame hungry, pride, and self-power over the entire world with his unconditional commitment to God. A vivid scriptural reader realizes Jesus' authority over demons, disease, and death after the time of spiritual retreat and temptation in the desert. However, temptation was always there to be defeated with "radical obedience" to the God's will, even in the darkest time of his existence at Gethsemane, and the uttermost agony on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27: 46).⁶ "Without the possibility of Jesus sinning . . . his atonement could scarcely have been vicarious" (Blomberg).⁷

This firsthand information from the gospels depicting the Jesus' humanity in coping with temptation is a primary concern in a Christian daily life about Jesus' teaching methods. It reveals a strategic plan to prevail over evil: "Constant prayers and regular fasting to maintain a spiritual communication in spirit and in body."⁸

⁵ Ibid., 142.

⁶ Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, 1884-, 126, in Richard H. Hiers, *Jesus' Ethics: Four Interpretations* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961).

⁷ Stephen Patton, "The Life of Jesus", in video presentation #3, week 3, commentary on Blomberg (Min 502- New Testament Survey, Master of Ministry, Anderson University, SC. 2010).

⁸ Sergio Palacio, "The World Needs Us to be Jesus' Strategic Plan (2009-2012)", 1. (Note: This is the Chapter 5 of the Journal Paper presented in Leadership I, Master of Ministry, Anderson University, SC, 2009).

Biblical Actions:

- Create a mental habit of prayer that reminds you the Lord is always on your mind (James 5: 16-18).
- Pray most of the time in secret in the solitude of your soul and room (Matthew 6: 6).
- Authentically pray in public when you go to public places, showing respect for others and devotional attitude for yourself (Matthew 6: 5).
- Utter groaning or guttural sounds that only God can understand. For without praying as such, it is just words. We don't know what we are praying, but he knows our needs, and he knows as well God's will and what is best for us (1 Corinthians 14: 1-25).
- Regularly abstain from food especially as a religious discipline and to humble you; then, you worship the Lord with commitment and trust. "Jesus fasted 40 days" (Matthew 4: 1-11).
- Patiently wait for the definite result itself through time, and it alone that is guaranteed to be infallible, not the preliminary stages by which it is reached. It is God's time. "A time for everything" (Ecclesiastes 3: 1).

Hostility, controversy, rejection, and plots to kill him for blasphemy were surrounding his two-and-a-half years of ministry, approximately, according to Kostenberger, Kellum, and Quarles.⁹ Jesus was healing people disabled from different conditions (blind, deaf, lame, paralysis, to name a few), casting demons, speaking in parables, walking on the

⁹ Kostenberger, Kellum, and Quarles, 142

water, calming a storm, raising bodies from the death, and feeding people miraculously, to the point that many were in awe, following him as the Jews' promised Messiah.

The religious leaders were ruminating and confronting the reliable evidence -- Jesus defended himself against the charge of blasphemy, calling upon God the Father, his own works, John the Baptist, Moses, and others as his witnesses (John 5: 17-47). And the 12 apostles **Jesus** chose "were completely astounded" and "their hearts were hardened" (Mark 6: 51-52); the apostle Peter publicly, among the apostles, recognized him as the Son of God (Matthew 16: 16); but also denied him three times, after another apostle (Judas Iscariot) betrayed **Jesus** for money and sent him to a trial and crucifixion (John 18: 25-27).

Resolutely, when a believer recognizes the time of God coming to him, his confession of **Jesus** as the Messiah marks a significant transition in his own healing, preaching, and ministry. It is the revelation of his impending death and resurrection and ascension through the royal way of Calvary daily with love, faith, hope, and deeds. Thus he is ready to leave this world even while living *in* it, but not *of* it. Oblivious to many, the believer follows a kingdom that is not of this world, even though it is already established as reality. It seems a practical controversy to be what the believer is not, to accept the kingdom, rather to continue with a sinful nature that has been eradicated with **Jesus'** atonement on the cross. The "new human being" must spiritually purge her old being to a renewal creature in baptism, consecration, and sanctification.

Jesus' Ethics: Sin No More

The sufficiency of the Scripture in the passages where **Jesus** teaches a sinner to “Sin no more” (John 5: 14; John 8: 11; Mark 9: 47) is overwhelming. Yes, it is forgiveness what the Lord is bringing here, but that is in fact with a strong warning strategy to overcome temptation.

The sinner must openly and without fear show to the world the **Jesus**' face as the physiognomy of an honest Christian. No more hidden the life of Christ **Jesus** in the new creation of her new life. Sin is mortified and grace is quickened. In the same way that **Jesus** as Christ assumed the face of sin -- who knew no sin -- the sinner should assume the **Jesus**' face of righteousness no longer sinning through the gift of faith (1 John 3: 1-10; Romans 6: 1-14; 8: 1-17; Galatians 5: 24). “A man can receive only what is given him from heaven” (John 3: 27). Without the possibility of her ability to stop sinning, her righteousness “could scarcely have been vicarious,” paraphrasing Blomberg.¹⁰

Jesus' Ethics: The Ten Commandments

Are **Jesus**' commands really impracticable? “Defective it is not . . . Antiquated it is not, and in life and strength it will triumphs today over all the past.”¹¹ **Jesus** was teaching by example rather than rules, even though the Ten Commandments were settled as the law to comply through love mainly, faith, and deeds. Faith gives the ability to think about God's thoughts and to find something (Matthew 7: 7), honestly. And unconditional love will make the connection with the lover's deeds in a way that the principles he has been taught in **Jesus**' ethics make fruits in the day-by-day practice as a God-given grace.

¹⁰ Patton, “The Life of Jesus.”

¹¹ T.B. Saunders, *What is Christianity*, 1957, 130, in Richard H. Hiers, *Jesus' Ethics: Four Interpretations*.

Obedience comes from the heart where the kingdom of God dwells. Hence, if the obedient person wants to spread the love of Jesus, he must offer his life as a “living sacrifice” (Romans 12: 1) to God through his fellowship with the holy other; then he is not far from the kingdom of God (Mark 12: 29-34).

It is the historical (eternal) Jesus with his teachings, who must become greater, and the post-modern man and woman less. An individual must vanquish his old sinful nature and “born again” with God’s Spirit in her same body (John 3: 1-15). It is discovering that merely faith is the most compelling evidence.

Jesus’ Ethics: Sermon on the Mount

Jesus’ ethics were delivered in all he said and did. The kernel of his teachings was the “ethic of love” with emphasis on others as we love ourselves -- including the enemies -- if the believer really loves God.¹² So it seems the Sermon of the Mount (Matthew 5–7) is a Code of Conduct to follow in a Christian daily life with good disposition and patience without retaliation. “There is only one unique teaching of truth -- that universal and eternal teaching so perfectly expressed, for myself no less than for others, in the gospels.”¹³

The obedient person cannot be obedient to the teachings of Jesus and simply carry on as before. It has enlightened the people to compromise with the world in all epochs. In C.T. Campion’s own understanding: “In the Sermon on the Mount He lets ethics, as the essence of religion, flood their hearts, leading them to judge the value of piety by what it makes of a man from the ethical point of view. Within the messianic hopes which His

¹² Albert Schweitzer, *Philosophy of Civilization*, 1936, esp.Ch. 6, in Richard H. Hiers, *Jesus’ Ethics: Four Interpretations*.

¹³ Leon, Tolstoy, noted in his diary, 1889.

hearers carry in their hearts, He kindles the fire of an ethical faith . . . The truth that the ethical is the essence of religion is firmly established on the authority of **Jesus**.”¹⁴

Rebuilding the Kingdom (Temple) of God (Heaven)

Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17: 21). Even though the heartfelt man or woman is saved by faith (grace), keeping the commandments, he is judged by works (Revelation 20: 13; James 3: 26; 2 Corinthians 5: 10; 1 Corinthians 3: 13-15; John 5: 29). As **Jesus** did in faith, word, and deed, she is called to repent, and “stop sinning” in the realms of thought, word, deed, and omission. Therefore, “the kingdom of heaven [God] is at hand” (Matthew 4: 17 KJB), the Spiritual realm of God where peace reigns. “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24: 14).

Mystical Union

Like Paul (Gal 2: 20) and many others have said, Christ **Jesus** lives in them in *mystical union*. E.g., Montgomery’s interpretation of mysticism with the person of **Jesus** and his ethics is, “Christ [**Jesus**] mysticism means, in effect, acknowledging **Jesus** or Christ as Lord, surrendering our wills to his, and in doing his will, experiencing ‘mystical,’ i.e., ethical union or communion with him and his will. This also brings [us] into union with God, as [our] will is conformed and united to the will of God, manifested in **Jesus** Christ as will of love.”¹⁵

¹⁴ C.T. Campion, *Out of my Life and Thought*, 1949, 58.

¹⁵ W. Montgomery, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (The MacMillan Company, 1931), 379, in Richard H. Hiers, *Jesus’ Ethics: Four Interpretations*.

The level of commitment is what makes this embodiment of Christ **Jesus** in an individual with much or less intensity and reality. Schweitzer says, “We should claim the right to conceive the idea of union with **Jesus** on the lines of our own world-view.” He also declares that “ethics must originate in mysticism” in his *Philosophy of Civilization*.¹⁶

*The Great Commission: The World Needs Us to Be **Jesus***

The costs for following the Lord **Jesus** are conquerable; the disciple is supposed to yield them as a wonderful living sacrifice for the reward of eternal life. When the disciple conquers them and accept they are not going to stop him anymore in his Christian mission, the disciple might delude himself in the conception that he is the only one savior **Jesus** Christ and gets lost in error.

The *second **Jesus*** is that representation of the Christ **Jesus** in action in his life. The believer is called to be like him, “imitating the inimitable,” saying 24/7 without stopping, “Holy, holy, holy is [**Jesus**] the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come” (Revelation 4: 7-8).¹⁷ “The world needs us to be **Jesus**” in a new manifestation of his presentation, moving from triumphalism to maturity.

Significantly enough, the teachings of **Jesus** are “a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed” (Luke 2: 34). With **Jesus** there would be no neutral ground: individuals would either joyfully accept him or totally reject him; men and women could be outright or superficial show, hypocrites (Matthew 7: 5; 15: 7; 23: 13; 23: 27; 24: 51; Mark 7: 6; 12: 15; Luke 12: 1; Galatians 2: 13; 1 Peter 2: 1).

¹⁶ Schweitzer, 304.

¹⁷ A. Volfing, *John the Evangelist in Medieval German Writing* (Oxford: University Press, 2001), 45, in Kostenberger, Kellum, and Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, 291.

Conclusion

Accepting the birth, ministry, suffering, trial, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of God's only begotten son, our Lord **Jesus** Christ, is a must. May someone ask: "Why God did not stop that "suicidal" sacrifice? What kind of Father does that to his son?" There was *not* another "paradoxical outcome" to forgive humanity in the divine mind.¹⁸

A merciful one who entered the world sending his Word in the flesh of his beloved Son, "[who] have not come to call the righteousness, but the sinners," and as "the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Matthew 9: 12-13; Luke 19: 10), for those who humbly cry for mercy. That is why God forgave humanity in restoration, punishing them in his own Son, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3: 16).

The unique set of historical circumstances in an era that is forever past still proclaims the timeless glory of God in the same heaven and the same earth and the same human being, through our Lord **Jesus** Christ and the actual phenomena of Scripture. Even today this requires interpretation, reconciles contradictions, suspends judgment, and acknowledges scholars own limitations to proper apprehension and appropriation of the biblical message in **Jesus** research. The eternity past of the historical **Jesus** with the account of his future Second coming have invaded the present forever and ever. "It is the Lord!" (John 21: 7; 25).

¹⁸ H. N. Ridderbos, *Gospel According to John*, trans. J. Vriend (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 587, in Kostenberger, Kellum, and Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, 314.

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