



## Extracts of Teachers' Notes from Film Two

### *The Coming of the Christ*

Early attempts to discern what is historically accurate compared to interpretation and additions by the Gospel writers were highlighted by the 19<sup>th</sup> century German theologian David Strauss (1808-1874). Strauss argued that the Church had interpreted Jesus' life in the light of Old Testament prophecies and fabricated stories like the Virgin Birth to fit in with messianic expectations. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more and more scholars adopted the findings of biblical criticism as the historically accurate Jesus appeared to retreat. Scholars differ widely over which parts of the New Testament narratives (particularly the Gospels) are 'true' in the sense of being authentically coming from the mouth of the actual Jesus.

Not surprisingly, this had an impact on faith, including the ministry of the Church. The so called 'secular theology' of the 1960s saw Bishop John Robinson describing a new vision of God for man 'come of age'. In 1985 a group of American academics calling themselves 'The Jesus Seminar' ruled that Jesus had not thought of himself as divine, did not walk on water or perform miracles and was not raised from the dead. In the 1990s the Bishop of Durham denied the literal truth of the Virgin Birth and the Anglican clergyman Don Cupitt embraced a powerfully post-modern vision of God in which He could not be said to 'exist' in any normal sense of the word. There is ongoing division within academic theology as to the extent to which normal language can be applied to talk about God and indeed the event of Jesus. Meanwhile congregations all over the world continue to worship the Christ of faith little knowing (or perhaps caring) how much debate goes on.

### Activity

#### **Time Codes & Questions: *The Coming of the Christ***

**00:00 - 00:55:** Describe what the title 'Son of Man' had meant for the Old Testament psalmist and how that had shifted in recent years.

**01:50 - 02:24:** What happened at 'Pentecost'?

**02:28 - 03:29:** Paraphrase what Peter said about Jesus



**03:30 - 03:58:** List the three Synoptic gospels

**04:00 - 04:35:** What was the single biggest stumbling block for Jews in trying to believe that Jesus was God?

**04:40 - 06:25:** Summarise the early beliefs expressed in St Paul's hymn

**06:28 - 07:24:** Explain why the "*I am*" statements in St John's Gospel are so important

**07:28 - 09:40:** How does the author of St John's Gospel depict Jesus?

**09:44 - 11:15:** Summarise the principle concerns of Arius

**11:17 - 12:07:** What became orthodox Christian belief at the Council of Nicaea?

**12:08 - 13:10:** Write out the '*Filioque Clause*'

**13:11 - 13:55:** If the Filioque Clause is not included in the creed does this mean that the speaker does/does not believe the Holy Spirit comes through Jesus?

**14:00 - 14:35:** Find out what the word 'incarnation' actually means.

## ACTIVITY

Watch the film *The Coming of the Christ* and read through the Background Notes.

1. Invite students to make a timeline of how beliefs about Jesus developed from earliest events to evolved belief in the Trinity including the following: