

Holy hesitance moves me to procrastinate on this: as I actually get to writing this thinksheet, it's almost four weeks later than the typing of the title! Even so, I feel I must do no more than jot "notes toward," or--even more modestly-- "images of." For me, a few days before my 64th birthday, Jesus is:

1. *Axis mundi*, my primary Access to the Center of life/world/reality/universe; "the stillpoint of the turning world" (TSEliot) and the fountain of living water to and from which I go daily, hourly, moment by moment. "The historical Jesus," while largely a shadowy figure vis-a-vis the interests of modern historiography, is the seed-core of a world-historical movement ("Christianity") into which I was born in the sense that my parents and community were more shaped by this than by any other world-historical movement: I was born christocentric in the sense that "Jesus" was "the Name above every name" even though my largely secularized domestic and communal environment seldom named this (or any other world-centering) name. While at 17 I was "born again" into this Name, it's an important fact that, in the physical and cultural senses, I was "born" into that name 17 years earlier. Both of these births were and are both freeing and limiting: I need to witness to others about the free-ings, and to listen to others through and beyond the limitings.
2. "The Coming One"--by which I mean both (1) that when Kingdom Come comes, God will be revealed to the world--as God now is to "the faithful"--as like Jesus, and (2) the "Second Coming," i.e., the represencing in power of the Jesus who first presented himself in preaching. This (2) is a faith-inference from "the Christ Event," i.e., the life-death-resurrection of the historical Jesus; and it uses the messianic imagery which informed Jesus' self-consciousness and mission-understanding: PROPHET ("like Moses"; so, the Samaritans), HIGH PRIEST (e.g., Zadokites and Qumran), KING (Ps.72, Zech.9.10). But historical knowledge and--even more!--historical criticism has freed me from the traditional Christian claims that (a) Jesus is the all-the-promises-fulfilling Messiah and (b) the Jews are mistaken and even wicked in claiming that "Jesus as the Christ" does not exhaust, and lay exclusive claim to, the messianic hope. I am horrified and saddened, when I read ancient-medieval-modern verbal claims of Jews and Christians against each other--horrified at the ignorance and saddened at the arrogance. God has opened new possibilities for the dialog, and we Jews and Christians will be unfaithful to the biblical God if we do not move up from the old grounds. E.g., meditate on what opens up if the weight of attention is shifted to [above] (1) from (2).
3. My devotional-theological Rubik Cube: both the Puzzle, and the Solution. AV: "What think ye of Jesus, who is called the Christ?" The point is, I do think of Jesus, supremely and uniquely, when I pray/meditate/contemplate/"connect" in problem-solving and life-enriching. Because I reject none of the christological "titles," I am an orthodox Christian: in using all the titles, I add orthopraxy to my orthodoxy: in qualifying all the titles as metaphorical, I am orthodox-open, nondogmatic no matter how systematic, system-building, my mood and action. I am a minimalist in historical claims, a maximalist in devotion, and an optimalist in intra-extra-church dialog.
4. My model. Jesus lived theonomously, his devotion and reason and conscience under the perpetual rule of God and toward the world-historical victory of God. I cannot do more: I cannot do less: I cannot, will not, do other. And sometimes I am given the joyful courage not to care about the consequences. And always I am given the assurance that I am accepted if I am righthearthed, not matter how wrongheaded I may prove to be. "The Love that moves the stars" (Dante) moves, claims, has, my heart. That Love resurrected Jesus when he was wrongheaded about history, and that Love will not let me down and will not let me go. That is my peace, my joy, my hope. And "Jesus" is the central name, the sound, the mantra, of it all.

Other Christology thinksheets: 36,70,548,575,632,715,861,862,864,920,968,1011,1012,1084,1222,1240,1300,1301,1424,1615.