

## WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

"JESUS" - is the Greek form of "Yeshua" (Joshua) which means "the Lord saves."

**Matthew 1:20-21:** ... An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because **he will save his people** from their sins."

"CHRIST" - is the Greek word for "Messiah" which means "The Anointed One."

**Acts 10:37-38:** You know what has happened throughout Judea ... how **God anointed Jesus of Nazareth** with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

### THE BIG QUESTION

**Matthew 16:13-15:** He asked, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Christianity is different from the other major religions of the world.

The others are more or less the teachings of a particular religious leader.

But Christianity is not so much the teachings of Christ. Christianity is Christ.

Christianity does not consist primarily in the validity of its teachings, but in the reality of a historical event – the "Christ-Event."

### EVEN THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS KNEW THIS.

**I Corinthians 15:14:** And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

Why? Because faith does not save us. Only the one we put our faith in saves us.

**I Corinthians 15:17-19:** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

If there is no resurrection,

- A. Your faith is futile (v. 17)
- B. You are still in your sins (v. 17)
- C. Those who die are lost (v. 18)
- D. We are to be pitied (v. 19).

If Jesus is not who he said he was, there is nothing to Christianity and Christians are nothing but poor fools.

**Point: We believe in Jesus' teachings because we believe in Jesus – that he is who he said he was and that he lived, died and was raised from the dead for us. Our faith is in Jesus. So it is critically important that we know who Jesus is.**

## **WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?**

### **1. JESUS CHRIST IS TRULY DIVINE.**

#### **A. THE EARLY CHRISTIANS TAUGHT THAT JESUS WAS DIVINE.**

##### **1. WHAT DID JOHN TEACH?**

**John 1:1-4, 14, 18:**

**John 1:1:** The Word was God.

**John 1:14:** Who is the Word? Jesus

##### **2. WHAT DID PETER TEACH?**

**2 Peter 1:1:** To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.

Jesus is here referred to as our God and savior.

##### **3. WHAT DID THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS TEACH?**

**Hebrews 1:8:** But about the Son (Jesus) he says, "Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever." (Quoting Psalm 45:6)

Again Jesus is spoken of as God

##### **4. WHAT DID PAUL TEACH?**

**Titus 2:13:** We wait for the blessed hope -- the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jesus is our Great God and Savior.

**Colossians 2:9:** For in Christ all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form.

The very essence of deity was present in its totality in Jesus' human body.

#### **Colossians 1:15-20**

JESUS IS HERE DESCRIBED PERFORMING THE **WORKS** OF DEITY.

v. 16: He is the creator of the universe.

v. 17: He is the sustainer of the universe.

JESUS IS DESCRIBED AS HAVING THE **STATUS** OF DEITY.

v. 18: He is the head of the church.

v. 18: In all things he has supremacy.

JESUS IS DESCRIBED AS POSSESSING THE **TRAITS** OF DEITY.

v. 17: He is before all things -- He is eternal.

v. 19: All the fullness of God dwelt in him.

See also **Romans 9:5** and **Philippians 2:5-11**.

There is an unanimity of witness by the early Christians that Jesus was God in the flesh.

Why is this so important?

Because Jews were strict monotheists.

The idea of God's becoming incarnate was blasphemous.

## **B. JESUS TAUGHT THAT HE WAS DIVINE.**

### **1. John 5:16-18**

Jesus claims that God is his Father.

The Jews understood this to be making himself "equal to God" (v. 18).

### **2. John 8:52-59**

**v. 59:** The Jews understood this claim to be blasphemous.

What had he said?

On face value that he had existed before Abraham.

But he was claiming more than that.

Exodus 3:13-14. God's name here is "I Am Who I Am" or "I Am".

Jesus says: "Before Abraham was I Am."

Jesus is claiming to be one with the God of the Old Testament.

### **3. John 20:26-29**

Jesus says blessed are those who come to believe with Thomas that he is Lord and God.

### **4. John 8:45-46**

Jesus claims to be sinless.

### **5. Mark 2:5-7, 10-12**

Jesus claims to be able to forgive sins.

### **6. Matthew 25:31-46**

Jesus claims that he will judge the world.

**THERE ARE THREE POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO JESUS AND HIS CLAIMS ABOUT HIMSELF.**

#### **1. He is a liar.**

His claims are false and he knows it.

#### **2. He is a lunatic.**

His claims are false but he doesn't know it.

#### **3. He is Lord.**

His claims are true.

The one option which is not acceptable is the one that most nonchristians hold: Jesus was a good teacher.

**C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity:** I am trying to prevent anyone saying that really foolish thing that people often say about him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic -- on the level with the man who says that he is a poached egg -- or else he would be the devil of Hell.

You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

## II. JESUS CHRIST IS TRULY HUMAN.

### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST?

- A. Though divinely conceived, Jesus was born of a human mother (Luke 1:31-32).
- B. As a child, Jesus grew according to natural physical and mental processes (Luke 2:40,52).
- C. Jesus experienced the natural human needs of hunger (Mt 4:2); thirst (Jn 19:28); weariness from travel (Jn 4:6) and the need for sleep (Mt 8:24).
- D. Jesus experienced suffering and temptation (Hebrews 2:18).
- E. Jesus' death was real (Mk 15:37, 44-46).
- F. Jesus is like us in every way with one exception (Hebrews 2:17 and 4:15). The one exception: Jesus was without sin.

**Hebrews 4:15:** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.

**The Bible teaches that Jesus was fully God and fully human.**

**"One Person – Two Natures."**

**Bono:** The idea that God, if there is a force of Love and Logic in the universe, that it would seek to explain itself is amazing enough. That it would seek to explain itself by becoming a child born in poverty ... and straw, a child, I just thought, "Wow!" Just the poetry ... I saw the genius of picking a particular point in time and deciding to turn on this ... Love needs to find a form, intimacy needs to be whispered ... Love has to become an action or something concrete. It would have to happen. There must be an incarnation. Love must be made flesh.

## III. WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT THAT JESUS IS BOTH GOD AND MAN?

### A. THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

#### 1. BECAUSE JESUS IS DIVINE, HE IS THE PERFECT REVELATION OF WHO GOD IS.

**Hebrews 1:3:** The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being.

**Colossians 1:15:** He is the image of the invisible God.

**John 14:9b:** Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

#### **How can we know God?**

**John 1:18:** No one has ever seen God, but his only begotten Son, has made him known.

**In Jesus we see who God is and how he will respond to us.**

He goes to eat in the home of Zacchaeus **before** he repents -- God will accept you before you get your life right.

Jesus reaches out and touches a leper -- You are never too dirty or unclean for God to love.

Jesus drives out the money changers from the temple and chastises the Pharisees for their hypocrisy -- God hates sin and false piety.

Jesus dies on the cross so your sins can be forgiven -- God will go to any length to have a relationship with you.

However you see Jesus acting -- that is how the Father acts.

However you see Jesus feeling about something -- that is how the Father feels.

Whatever you hear Jesus saying -- that is what the Father thinks.

## **2. BECAUSE JESUS IS DIVINE, HE CAN BE THE ATONING SACRIFICE FOR OUR SINS.**

**Basic Point:** Only the sinless can make atonement for the sinful.

To make atonement for the sins of the world, there had to be a life that had no sin of its own.

**2 Corinthians 5:21:** God made him who had no sin to be sin (or a sin offering) for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

WHAT WAS REQUIRED FOR OUR SALVATION?

That a sinless life be lived on our behalf.

WHO COULD DO THAT?

No one but Jesus himself is perfect.

So Jesus Christ had to be divine to make our salvation possible.

## **B. THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST.**

### **1. Because Jesus was human, he can be our representative.**

**Romans 5:18-19**

Humankind owed God a debt -- the penalty for our sins.

But no human could pay it -- so we could not be released from our debt.

When Jesus became human, he could function as our representative and pay the debt we owed.

**Hebrews 2:17:** He had to be made like his brothers in every way in order that ... he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

### **2. Because Jesus was human, he understands our weaknesses.**

**Hebrews 4:15-16**

DOES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The results of Jesus' being able to understand our weaknesses:

V. 16: God desires to give us compassion and help.

when we come to him with our struggles and needs.

V. 16: We may approach God with confidence.

He will never be unfeeling or uncaring.

### **3. Because Jesus was human, his life can serve as our example.**

**1 Peter 2:21-23**

If Jesus had floated through life untouched by sin and pain, without emotion or temptation or struggles, he could not serve as our example.

Though we will never be at Jesus' level of sinlessness and spiritual maturity, we can learn how to face life and its problems by looking at the life he lived.