

Know the Key Teachings About Christ

Life of Jesus



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“Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

—Matthew 16:13

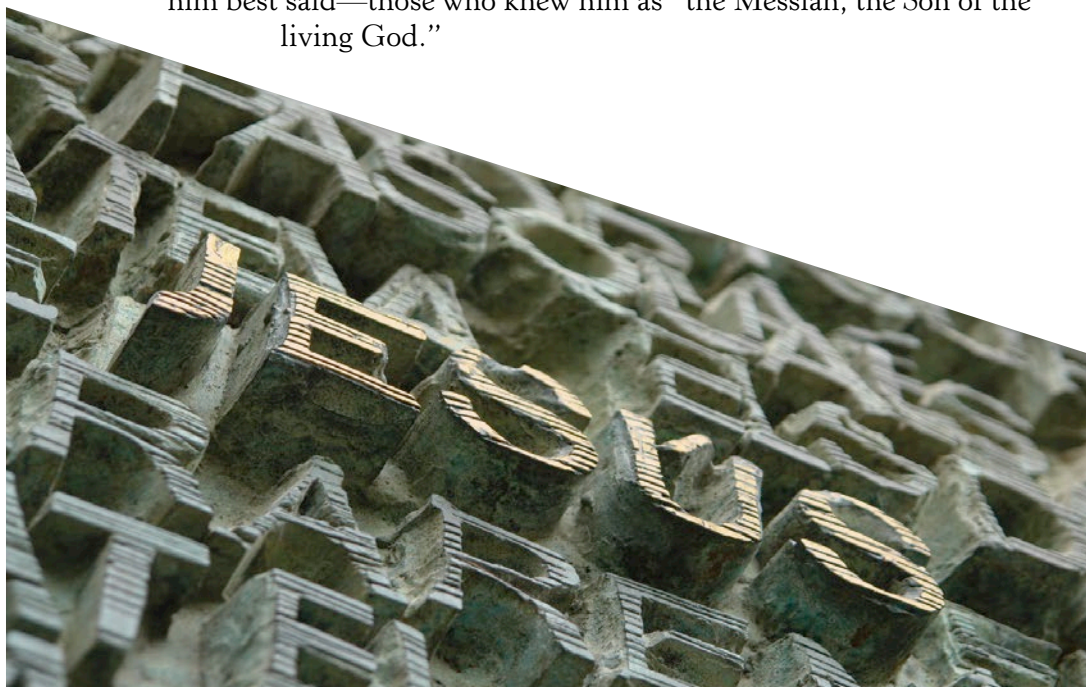
Jesus asked this question about himself to his disciples around 2,000 years ago. His disciples replied with answers based on things they knew or had experienced: “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets” (v. 14).

People in Jesus’ day had expectations about who he was and arrived at their conclusions based on those expectations. Today it is not very different. People gather ideas about Jesus from many places: from television and movies, from books and websites, from family, school, and office conversations. Some of these ideas are right on the mark—others miss the mark entirely.

Some people say Jesus was just a popular preacher or a guru of ethical living. Others say it is not even important to know who Jesus is. But for people who have given their lives to Jesus and have experienced life in a new and wonderful way, the question about Jesus’ identity is of greater-than-life importance.

After asking about what other people say, Jesus turned to his disciples and asked, “But what about you? Who do you say I am?” (v. 15). Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (v. 16).

What does it mean that Jesus is “the Messiah” and “the Son”? It means that he is much more than a popular preacher, a prophet, or a wise teacher. Who is Jesus? The following pages will answer this fundamental question. To understand who Jesus is, it is important to understand what he taught, how he lived, what he said, and what those who knew him best said—those who knew him as “the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”





1. Who is Jesus?

WHAT JESUS SAID

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” —John 14:6

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. . . . This is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day.” —John 6:35, 39 NLT

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” —John 8:12

See also Matthew 11:27–29; John 8:58; 10:30.

WHAT THOSE WHO KNEW HIM BEST SAID

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light all mankind. . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” —John 1:1–4, 14, 16–17

John was one of Jesus’ closest friends and earliest followers who was at the scene of Jesus’ execution.

“For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake.”

—1 Peter 1:18–20 NLT

Peter, one of Jesus’ twelve disciples, wrote this to Christians in the first century AD.

See also Matthew 16:16; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3.

WHAT GOD THE FATHER SAID

“While [Peter] was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!’” —Matthew 17:5

God the Father spoke plainly about Jesus.

WHAT NATURE SAID

“Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, ‘Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?’ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, ‘Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?’ They were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’”

—Mark 4:38–41

The natural world obeyed Jesus’ commands because he is its Creator.

See also Matthew 14:13–33.

WHAT THE DEMONS SAID

“In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, ‘Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!’” —Luke 4:33–34

The spiritual world recognized Jesus and his power.

See also Matthew 8:29; Mark 5:6–7.



Christ in the Storm on the Sea of Galilee by Rembrandt

WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID

“We may note in passing that He was never regarded as a mere moral teacher. He did not produce that effect on any of the people who actually met Him. He produced mainly three effects—Hatred—Terror—Adoration. There was no trace of people expressing mild approval.” —C. S. Lewis, Oxford and Cambridge professor and former agnostic

“I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison.”

—Napoleon Bonaparte, French emperor

“Why don’t the names of Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius offend people? The reason is that these others didn’t claim to be God, but Jesus did.” —Josh McDowell, Christian evangelist and apologist

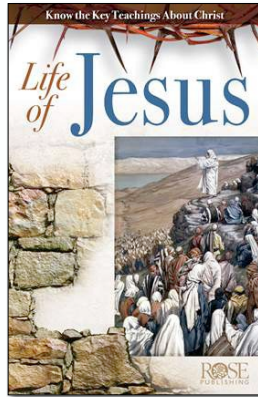
“He possessed neither wealth nor influence. His relatives were inconspicuous, and had neither training nor formal education. In infancy He startled a king; in childhood He puzzled doctors; in manhood He ruled the course of nature, walked upon the billows as if pavement, and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His service. The names of the past proud statesmen of Greece and Rome have come and gone. The names of the past scientists, philosophers, and theologians have come and gone; but the name of this Man abounds more and more. Though time has spread nineteen hundred years between the people of this generation and the scene of His crucifixion, yet He still lives, Herod could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him.” —from “The Incomparable Christ”

Summary: Jesus was more than human. In fact, he was human and divine at the same time—the Son of God. He is the Creator who entered his creation.

Beliefs about Jesus

Belief	Meaning	Scripture	Importance
God's Unity	There is only one God.	Deuteronomy 6:4 Exodus 20:2–3 Isaiah 43:10–11	God is eternal—he has always existed. There is one Creator of the universe.
The Trinity	There is only one God, but he exists eternally in three Persons: Father, Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit.	Matthew 3:16–17 Matthew 28:19 2 Corinthians 13:14	As Trinity, God's nature is relational and in unity.
Jesus' Virgin Birth	God the Son became a human being through a supernatural conception in the Virgin Mary's womb.	Matthew 1:18–23	Jesus did not inherit the sin nature that all other human beings have.
Jesus' Sinlessness	Jesus never sinned.	2 Corinthians 5:21 Hebrews 4:15 1 Peter 2:22	His sinlessness means that he is able to represent us before God and to provide our salvation.
Jesus' Deity	Jesus Christ is, in essence, God. He was not just a wise teacher or a good man—he is God.	John 1:1 Colossians 2:9 Hebrews 1:8	Because Jesus is both God and human, he is able to mediate between God and humankind. He is the only way for us to be restored spiritually to God.
Jesus' Humanity	Though fully divine, Jesus was also fully human.	John 1:14 Philippians 2:7–8 Hebrews 2:14	Jesus is able to fully represent humanity in atonement. If Jesus were not human, he could not have paid the price for humanity's sin.

Belief	Meaning	Scripture	Importance
Jesus' Sacrificial Death	His sacrificial death on the cross and his bodily resurrection can bring us to God.	Mark 10:45 1 Peter 2:24 1 Peter 3:18 John 14:6	Jesus' death on the cross paid the penalty for humanity's sin—both physical and spiritual death.
Jesus' Resurrection	Jesus rose bodily from the grave.	Romans 4:25 Romans 10:9 Luke 24:39	Jesus' resurrection from the dead is proof that he conquered death. Someday everyone will be resurrected and spend eternity in either heaven or hell.
Faith	Faith in God and Jesus Christ, not our good works, connect us to God.	Hebrews 11:6 Romans 4:5	We cannot save ourselves because we can never repay the debt owed to God, no matter how many good things we do. Faith is trusting that God will save us through Jesus' sacrifice. In faith, we accept God's gift of salvation.
Jesus' Intercession	Jesus represents us before God.	Hebrews 1:3 Hebrews 4:15 Hebrews 7:25 1 John 2:1	Jesus acts on our behalf. He defends us before God's law and against the accusations of Satan.
The Second Coming	Jesus will return again.	Matthew 24:30 Revelation 22:12 Colossians 3:3–4 Luke 12:40	When he returns, everyone will see him. Believers will rule with him in his kingdom forever. Those who do not believe will be separated from God forever.



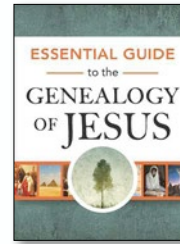
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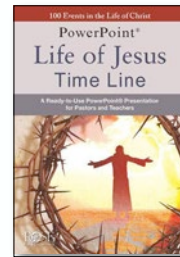


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