

SBC Theology Series: Who is Jesus Christ?

Pete Claproth notes

We are going through a 4 week series on theology which technically means the study of the nature of God. Last week we studied God and this week we continue with Jesus Christ.

DISCLAIMER: To try to explain or to study Jesus Christ in 35 minutes is impossible. So please know that this talk is only scratching the surface. And I am no authority on Jesus Christ but on the flip side, I, like many in this room have an intimate friendship with Him. But even in that, I fail on my side of the relationship. I'm that friend that Jesus should've drop kicked years ago. Yet Jesus was willing to sacrifice Himself for me. I can't reconcile that in my head.

Jesus Christ!

There is no other name that inspires love, hate, respect & disdain. Why?

How come people use Jesus as a curse word but not Mohammed or Buddha or any of the 330 million Hindu gods?

RC Sproul: No other person in history has provoked as much study, criticism, prejudice or devotion than Jesus of Nazareth

Jesus (Hebrew: Yeshua) to deliver, to rescue, to save

Christ: Messiah, meaning anointed one. It is a title more than a name.

The Anointed One that Saves

Savior

What is Jesus Like?

Ask people on the street and you might get:

- A good teacher, meek and mild?
- A prophet and said good things?
- A holy man, miserable; never laughs & is just waiting to point a finger at you when you fail?
- Is he mad at us and can't wait to condemn us to hell?

"Jesus is coming again and boy is ticked off!"

So I decided to go to the leading authority: My Facebook Friends!

Who do you think Jesus is?

Sherry: *God in flesh. My Lord & Savior!*

Gil: *He's my cousin. He's a good auto mechanic if you need one.*

Joe: *Our "everything", when we need "anything"...*

Livia: *Is my hope*

Eric: *Jesus is God. God is Jesus. "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me." John 14:1*

Ronda: *The son of God in flesh, who came to be the pure sacrifice for our sins. The ultimate example of love, advocating for us now at the right hand of the Father. My Shepherd, the way to the Father*

Wayne: *The Way, the Truth and the Life. The bread of life. The Savior. The Son of God. The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The only way to God. The Good Shepherd who has laid down His own life. The Word of God. The Creator. Just to name a few.*

A favorite description of mine comes from an essay called One Solitary Life:

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village where he worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never went to college. He never visited a big city. He never travelled more than two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He did none of the things usually associated with greatness. He had no credentials but himself. He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial.

He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone and today Jesus is the central figure of the human race and the leader of mankind's progress. All the armies that have ever marched, all the navies that have ever sailed, all the parliaments that have ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned put together, have not affected the life of mankind on earth as powerfully as that one solitary life.

The Gospel Accounts

Four different perspectives of the life of Jesus

- Matthew = King (Messianic lineage)
- Mark = Servant (focus on miracles)
- Luke = Son of Man (focus on relationships)
- John = Son of God (focus on Jesus' deity)

One thing for sure: The Gospel writers wrote with purpose!

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. If you believe this, you will have life because you belong to him.

- John 20:31

Why is so Jesus Controversial?

Because:

- We must make a decision *for or against* Jesus.
- No in-between, polarizing
- This decision determines *eternal destiny*

“The person who isn’t with me is against me, and the person who isn’t gathering with me is scattering.” - Matt 12:30

Can Jesus **fit in** to our own beliefs? We would have to:

- Alter (change in character)
- Revise (revisionists)
- Adapt (suitable, modify)

That would mean compromising the truth!

“A recycled Christ, a Christ of compromise, can redeem no one. A Christ watered down, stripped of power, reduced to a symbol is not Christ but antichrist”

- Lee Strobel

Lunatic, Liar or Lord

CS Lewis wrote: “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the 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 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.”

Bottom Line:

If our Eternal Destiny is at stake, we better invest in knowing **who Jesus is!**

What did Jesus look like?

- There’s not one mention about what he looked like.
- How tall he was.
- The color of his eyes & hair.
- All the external things are unimportant.

Instead, we find something more important & lasting. **His character.**

- **Magnetic:** Matt 14:13 *When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.*
- **Compassionate:** Luke 7:11 *When the Lord saw her (a widow who's only son just died), his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."*
- **No Social Prejudice:** Mark 2:15 *Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.) But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?" When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."*
- **Revolutionary:** John 3:16 *"Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."*
- **Intimate with God:** Luke 5:16 *But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.*
- **Authority:** Matt 7:28 *When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, **29**because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.*
- **Power:** Matt 14: 34 *When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.*
- **Love (Agape):** Romans 5:7-8 *Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Jesus' Controversial Arrival

- A pregnant unmarried teenager
- Born in a stable with a feeding trough for a crib
- No royal welcome
- Jesus came to his own but was unrecognized

Strange Incidents:

- A host of angels appearing to shepherds somewhere out in the paddocks (Luke 2:13)
- A star appears over Bethlehem (Saturn & Jupiter aligning?) (Matthew 2:2)

- Visiting astrologists (Magi) bearing unusual gifts (Matthew 2:1-12)
- An insecure local king afraid of losing his power to this Messiah decides to kill a generation of male toddlers. (Matthew 2:16-18)

Even Stranger: Before Jesus' Birth

His arrival on earth is not the first place we hear of Him. Throughout the Old Testament there are **355 prophecies about Jesus.**

700+ Years before Christ:

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (God with us). - Isaiah 7:14

Isaiah 52:13 The Lord says, "My servant will act wisely and accomplish his task. He will be highly honored. He will be greatly respected. 14 Many people were shocked when they saw him. He was so scarred that he no longer looked like a person. His body was so twisted that he did not look like a human being anymore. 15 But many nations will be surprised when they see what he has done. Kings will be so amazed that they will not be able to say anything. They will understand things they were never told. They will know the meaning of things they never heard."

Ch 53 Who has believed what we've been saying? Who has seen the Lord's saving power? 2 His servant grew up like a tender young plant. He grew like a root coming up out of dry ground. He didn't have any beauty or majesty that made us notice him. There wasn't anything special about the way he looked that drew us to him. 3 People looked down on him. They didn't accept him. He knew all about pain and suffering. He was like someone people turn their faces away from. We looked down on him. We didn't have any respect for him. 4 He suffered the things we should have suffered. He took on himself the pain that should have been ours. But we thought God was punishing him. We thought God was wounding him and making him suffer. 5 But the servant was pierced because we had sinned. He was crushed because we had done what was evil. He was punished to make us whole again. His wounds have healed us. 6 All of us are like sheep. We have wandered away from God. All of us have turned to our own way. And the Lord has placed on his servant the sins of all of us. 7 He was treated badly and made to suffer. But he didn't open his mouth. He was led away like a lamb to be killed. Sheep are silent while their wool is being cut off. In the same way, he didn't open his mouth.

The entire Bible points to Jesus

"...all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Jesus Christ, Luke 24:44).

After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to 2 disciples as they walked to Emmaus 10-12 km away. The disciples didn't recognize him. Could it be he was disfigured from being beaten they missed out that it was Jesus? Jesus asked them:

"What are you talking about as you walk along? They stood still, and their faces were sad. One of them was named Cleopas. He said to Jesus, "Are you the only person visiting Jerusalem who doesn't know? Don't you know about the things that have happened there in the last few days?"... And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he [Jesus] expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:27).

What did Jesus do?

- Miracles (All the Gospels)
 - Physical Healing (John 9)
 - Demonic (Matthew 8:28-34)
 - Forgave sin (John 8)
- His actions confirmed His claims!

What did Jesus claim?

- Jesus claimed to be the Son of God
 - Jesus and God are one and the same *"I and the Father are one."* – John 10:30
 - Jesus proclaims who he is Luke 4:17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: *The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.* Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*
- Jesus claimed that He was there at the beginning of creation *"Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."* John 8:58
- Jesus claimed He alone is the way to God: *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* John 14:6
- New Testament writers agree:
 - "There is no salvation by anyone else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved."* Acts 4:12

“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.” – 1 TIM 2:5

What does God say about Jesus?

Matthew 3:17 “...and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”*

Matt 17:5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, *“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”*

What does Jesus say to us?

*John 3:16 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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is **not condemned**, but whoever does not believe **stands condemned already** because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.*

Matt 11:28-30 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

One of the most important passages to study: In the Beginning (John 1)

v1 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 of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. v9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who **did receive him**, to those who **believed in his name**, he gave **the right** to become **children of God**— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but **born of God**.

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**.

John closes with this: John 21:24-25

Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

Jesus asks,
“Who do you say **I am**?”