

# Who Is Jesus?

## Introduction.

### Read Matthew 16:13-18

In the annals of history, no life stands out more than the life of the man from Galilee, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Great man? Absolutely. Great philosopher, religious genius, or prophet? Yes, to all. But since other historical figures have fit a similar profile, what distinguishes Jesus from them? Why does his life stand out more than theirs? Why does his *name* stir up more controversy than any other name in history? The answer is simple—it is what he said about *who he was*. To believe his claims about himself, to embrace them, and even be willing to die for them is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. It is the dividing line between the “religious” and a true Christian; between eternal life and eternal damnation. How we respond to Christ’s question to his disciples—“*Who do YOU say I am?*”—is the first and most critical step in our journey towards truth. Without this revelation, without this understanding, all our religious deeds are futile.



## A. The Bible’s Predictions about Jesus.

1. The absolute authority of the Bible (*2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21*).
  - The Bible contains 66 books, written by 40 authors, covering a period of approximately 1600 years.
  - The NT stands the three tests of all historical documents: bibliographical, internal, & external evidences.<sup>1</sup>
  - Bibliographical: Over 20,000 copies of NT manuscripts exist today.<sup>2</sup>
  - Internal Evidence: Written by eyewitnesses (*Luke 1:1-3; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:3; John 19:35*).
  - External Evidence: Other historical documents written at that time and archaeological findings confirm the Bible.
2. The fulfilled prophecies about Jesus (*Luke 24:27*).
  - There are 60 major *messianic* prophecies in the OT, and approximately 270 ramifications, which were all fulfilled in Christ.
  - The Bible contains over 300 references to his coming, the first reference found in *Genesis 3:15*.
  - His blood line would go from *Adam* to Noah, Shem, *Abraham*, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and King *David*.
  - He would be born of a virgin in Bethlehem, rejected, betrayed, sacrificed on a cross, and rise from the dead.
  - *Professor Stoner*: “The chances for any man to have...fulfilled [even] eight of these prophecies is 1 in 10<sup>17</sup> (i.e. 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000).”<sup>3</sup>

## B. The Radical Claims Jesus Made...

1. About himself (it was clearly understood by the religious scholars of his day that Jesus claimed he was God). Consider his statements:
  - *My Father is always at his work...and I, too, am working.* (John 5:17-18 with John 10:30-33)
  - *I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.* (John 6:51)
  - *I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but have the light of life.* (John 8:12)
  - *Before Abraham was born, I am!* (John 8:58)
  - *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* (John 14:6)

<sup>1</sup> C. Sanders, *Introduction to Research in English Literary History*. [MacMillian Company, 1952], pp. 143

<sup>2</sup> Josh McDowell, *More Than A Carpenter* [Living Books, Tyndale House Publishers, 1977], pp. 48

<sup>3</sup> Peter W. Stoner, and Robert C. Newman, *Science Speaks* [Chicago: Mood Press, 1976], pp. 106-112

2. Christ's claims about his death, burial and resurrection.

- *Destroy this temple [his body], and I will raise it again in three days. (John 2:19)*
- *As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:40)*

3. Christ's claims about his return to earth.

- *In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven. (Matthew 26:64)*
- *In my Father's house are many rooms...I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you may also be where I am. (John 14:2-3)*

**C. The Apostle's Claims of Jesus.**

1. That they saw Jesus after he resurrected (*1 John 1:3; Acts 22:6-10; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8*).
2. That the miraculous power they demonstrated came from Jesus himself (*Acts 3:12, 16; 14:3*).
3. That *salvation is found in no one else [but Jesus], for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)*

**D. Why Does the Bible Teach That Jesus The Only One Who Can Save Us and Grant Us Eternal Life?**

1. Because Jesus is God, who came down in the flesh (*John 1:1-5; 14; 1 Timothy 3:16*).
2. Because the predictions of Scripture point only to Jesus and no other Savior.
  - Genesis to Revelation is a library of genealogies, shadows, symbols, and prophecies about Jesus.
  - The Bible points to no other man in history who would be born to save us eternally, other than Jesus.
  - Jesus was either, a lunatic, a liar, or Lord when he claimed he was God; the only Savior of the World.
  - The Savior and King of the World would be the descendant of Abraham, and of David (*Mt. 1:1*).
3. Because Christ's life is the only life that could redeem us from death and eternal separation from God.
  - Adam's sin & disobedience made us all sinners (*Proverbs 20:9; Romans 5:12*).
  - A holy and righteous God cannot allow any sinner into his presence (*Romans 1:7-32; 2:1-6; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11*).
  - Everyone is powerless to redeem themselves because all fall short of God's glory (*Romans 3:9-26*).
  - Animal sacrifice without blemish was required to atone for sins in OT—life for life (*Lev. 17:11; Rom. 5:6-9; 6:23*).
  - Jesus was predestined before time to sacrifice his blood to atone for our sins (*1 Peter 1:17-21*).
  - Only Jesus could do this because he was God and without sin (*2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 1:17-19*).
  - No mortal (a slave to sin) can free himself from sin—only God can do it (*Lev.26:13; Rom.6:17-18*).
  - God established no other person than Jesus to save us from his wrath (*John 3:18; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5*).

**E. What Does Jesus Requires of Those Who Wish to Follow Him?**

1. Stop trusting in our own religious, pious deeds to earn God's favor and salvation (*Proverbs 3:5; Proverbs 28:26a*).
2. Love him more than any other person or thing (*Matthew 6:23; 10:37-39*).
3. Dethrone *self* to make him Lord and King on the throne of our hearts (*Luke 9:24; Galatians 2:20*).
4. Stop living in any lifestyle the Bible calls immoral or sin (*John 3:19-21; 8:10-11; Acts 15:20; Romans 1:24-32; 2:5-10; 6:15-22; 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:1-12; 6:9-10, 12-20; 10:8; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-11; Colossians 3:5-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 1 John 3:4-6*).
5. Love each other in the same way Jesus loves us (*John 15:12-13; 1 John 2:9-11; 4:7-21*).
6. Forgive everyone of any wrongdoing just as Jesus forgave us of our sins (*Matthew 6:12, 14-15; Matthew 18:21-35*).
7. Be a servant of all (*Matthew 20:25-28; Mark 9:35*).
8. Know his Word (*John 15:7; Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16*).
9. Pray daily (*Matthew 5:44; 6:5-13; Luke 18:1-8; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17*).
10. Advance God's kingdom through finding and making disciples (*Matthew 28:19-20*).

**F. What is the Evidence of a True Christian and Believer in Jesus? Read 2 Corinthians 13:5**

1. An ability to hear and respond to what God says (*John 8:47*).
2. Love, devotion, & obedience to Jesus & his teachings (*Mt. 28:20; John 8:31; 14:15, 23-24; 1 John 2:3-6; 5:3*).
3. Love & commitment to his body, his family, which is the Church (*Acts 4:42-47; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Ephesians 2:21-22; 4:11-16; Colossians 1:17-18 with 2:19; Hebrews 10:25; 1 John 1:7*).
4. A life of love, holiness and purity which Jesus demonstrated (*1 John 2:3-6; 3:4-6*).
5. No compromise, even in the face of death (*Daniel 3 & 6; Luke 6:22; Acts 4:1-22; 2 Timothy 2:11-12*).
6. A life consistent (at home & work) with our profession of faith at church (*Titus 1:16; 1 John 2:3-6*).