

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

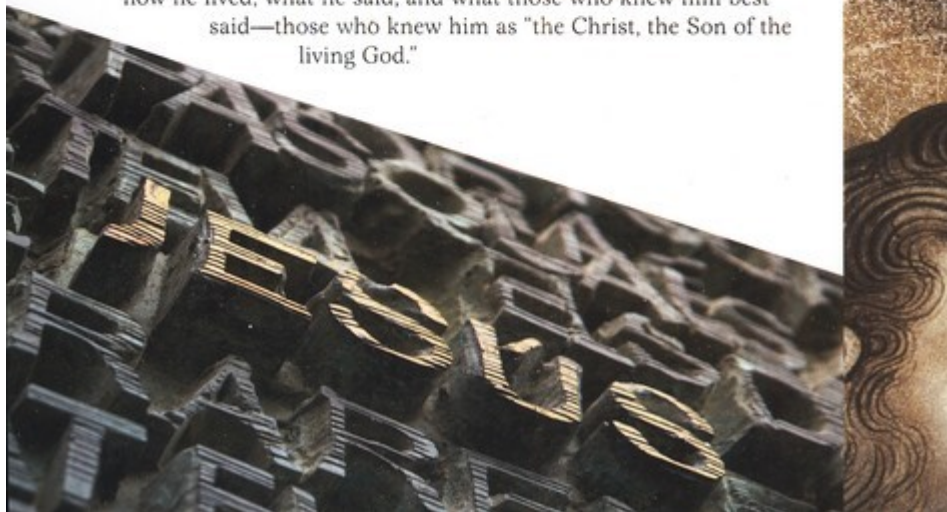
Jesus asked this question about himself to his disciples around 2,000 years ago. His disciples replied with answers based on things they knew or had experienced: “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets” (v. 14).

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 newspapers, 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 Christ, the Son of the living God” (v. 16).

What does it mean that Jesus is “the Christ” 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 Christ, 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. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty... And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."—John 6:35

"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 of men.... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.... From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."—John 1:1–4, 14–17

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

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake."—1 Peter 1:18–20

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 enveloped 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 evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, 'Ha! 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 (1898–1963)

"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 (1769–1821)

"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.