

LESSON ESSENTIALS

WHO IS JESUS?

LESSON 1: WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

When you are meeting someone for the first time, what type of information do you want to know about them? When you are trying to introduce your friend to a new person what type of information do you use to acquaint them with each other? These are questions we can consider in light of the subject of “Who is Jesus Christ?” What do you need to know about Him in order to really know Him? How would you introduce Him to other people in your life?

The popular British writer and theologian, C.S. Lewis, has been paraphrased as saying that when we read the scriptures and read what Jesus did and said, then we must decide that Jesus Christ is either a liar, a lunatic, or He is the Lord. Who do you say He is?

By reading the Bible, we can learn much about who Jesus said He was. By studying what Jesus did during His life on earth, we get a broader understanding of who He was and what He came to do.

“He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:13-16)

It is not uncommon to hear people say that they believe that Jesus was a real man, and that He was a great teacher. Or maybe they will say that He was a prophet. But that is not what Jesus said about Himself. Being able to answer the question “Who is Jesus?” is the most important piece of understanding you could ever attain. While merely knowing about Jesus is not enough for salvation, it is a good place to begin in your personal faith journey, and in your introduction of Jesus to other people in your life.

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Often, because of what we learned as children, or because of what our families and communities believe, there are difficult truths in the Bible that we hesitate to embrace. However, if we believe that the Bible is the Word of God, then we need to read it looking to agree with it, and looking to align our beliefs with what it says. If we approach the Bible looking for it to prove that we are correct then we will find ourselves getting very confused.

Praying that the Lord would grant you wisdom and understanding is crucial to truly understanding who Jesus is. When we approach the Bible believing it is true, and when we read, study, and listen with a willingness to find out that our original thoughts and beliefs may be wrong, then the Lord can reveal Himself to us.

A thorough reading of the Gospels shows you the actions and character of Jesus. He did many great miracles. He spoke great wisdom. He loved and served people with compassion and mercy. But He also said He was the Son of God the Father, He said He was the Christ, and the Messiah. Was He a liar? Was He confused? Was He intentionally leading people astray?

One day, Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” This is interesting. The people of Jesus’ day also think He was a great teacher or a prophet. But Jesus wanted to know who His closest followers believed Him to be. “He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:13-16) Jesus goes on to tell Peter that he was blessed because of his answer. Following, serving, obeying, and working with Jesus wasn’t enough. The disciples

needed to truly know who Jesus was. Knowing that Jesus was the Christ was the most important thing that Peter could know.

If you are struggling to truly know Jesus, do not worry: you are not alone. Many people find themselves in a place where they need to wrestle through and decide between what they always thought and what the Bible says is true. If you are helping someone to come to know Jesus for the first time, be patient with them as they work out the questions they have.

There is historical evidence that Jesus of Nazareth lived and died just as the Bible explains, so in one regard we do know who Jesus is. But taking one step further to know more about Him (and to believe more about Him) than that He merely existed takes faith and wisdom. God is willing to give you both. Come to the Bible expectant and humble and seek to truly know who Jesus is. It makes all the difference in the world.

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IN REVIEW

- One cannot be neutral in their thoughts of who Jesus is. Either He is the Lord (as he says) or He is a liar, or He is a lunatic. Which will you choose to agree with?
- The historical evidence proves that Jesus lived as the Bible records. It is up to each individual to study the Bible with discernment and wisdom to truly know and understand who Jesus is.
- Coming to the Bible hoping it will prove your personal beliefs to be correct is dangerous and unhelpful. Even in the difficult subjects, we must come to the Bible believing it is correct and true, humbly accepting the challenge and correction to our personal thoughts.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- Who do you say Jesus is?
- Given your family situation or upbringing, what aspect of who Jesus is is the hardest for you to grasp?
- Spend some time reading the Gospels to discover who Jesus truly is, and to maybe come to know Him for the first time.

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