



One of the most significant teachings of the Christian faith is that the life, words and deeds of the historic Jesus seem to indicate that He was more than just a man. In this session we will seek to discover who He really is.

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## DISCOVERY • 1

# Who Is Jesus?

Men and women down through the ages have been divided over the question, “Who is Jesus?”

### DISCUSS

Many people don't mind talking about Buddha, Mohammed or Confucius, but are uncomfortable with the subject of Jesus? Why?

One of the most significant teachings of the Christian faith is that the life, words and deeds of the historic Jesus point to the fact that He was more than just a man. In this session we will seek to discover who He really is.

Over the past several years, countless authors have written numerous books and articles to explain the person and life of Jesus. Consider, for example, the recent book, *The Lost Years of*

*Jesus*, which states that Jesus spent the years of His life between 13 and 30 in India. Another book, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, presents readers with the notion that Mary Magdalene was the wife of Jesus and that they had as many as six children.

Scholar Michael Green puts it this way: “*It is a matter of amazement to me that books get published, and television programs produced, which set out the most bizarre interpretations of Jesus of Nazareth on the most slender of evidence.*”

Many people tend to base their thinking about Jesus on what they have heard from others. Let's look at some of the statements Jesus made about Himself.

## ● WE ARE ONE

*“I and [God] the Father are one.’ Again the Jews picked up stones to stone Him, but Jesus said to them, ‘I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone Me?’ ‘We are not stoning You for any of these,’ replied the Jews, ‘but for blasphemy, because You, a mere man, claim to be God.’”*  
— John 10:30-33

## DISCUSS

What might Jesus have meant by His statement?

What did the crowd understand Jesus’ statements to mean?

Why did it incite them to want to kill Him?

Greek scholar A.T. Robertson comments on Jesus’ statement, *‘I and the Father are one.’* He explains that *“the ‘one’ is neuter, not masculine, in the Greek, and does not indicate one in person or purpose, but rather one in ‘essence or nature.’ This crisp statement is the climax of Christ’s claims about the relation between the Father and Himself. They stir the crowd to uncontrollable anger.”*

— A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*

## ● PROVE IT!

*“When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ‘Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’ Immediately Jesus knew in His spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and He said to them, ‘Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, “Get up, take your mat and walk”? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...’ He said to the paralytic, ‘I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.’ He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone, and they praised God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this!’”* — Mark 2:5-12

## DISCUSS

What is the main point of this story?  
Why did Jesus heal the man?

C.S. Lewis gives us an idea of how Jesus’ statements affected His listeners: *“The claim [of Jesus] was to forgive sins: any sins. Now unless the speaker is God, this is really so preposterous as to be comic. We can all understand how a man forgives offenses against himself...You steal my money and I forgive you. But what should we make of a man...who announces that he forgave you for...stealing other men’s money?...He unhesitatingly behaved as if He was the party chiefly concerned in all offenses.”*  
— C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

## ● I’VE BEEN AROUND

Back during the Exodus of the nation of Israel from Egypt in about 1800 B.C., Moses had a conversation with God. God instructed Moses to present himself to the Israelites as their leader. Moses asked God, *“I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?”* God answered Moses by saying, *“I AM WHO I AM...Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*  
— Exodus 3:13,14

Over 18 centuries years later, Jesus is having a conversation with a hostile crowd. He says, *“Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing My day; he saw it and was glad.’ You are not yet fifty years old,’ the Jews said to Him, ‘and You have seen Abraham!’ ‘I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘before Abraham was born, I AM!’ At this, they picked up stones to stone Him, but Jesus hid Himself, slipping away.”* — John 8:56-58

## DISCUSS

What did the crowd understand Jesus to be saying?

Why did they attempt to stone Him?

What do you think is the significance of this statement by Jesus?

## ● ALL RISE!

*“Then the Jewish leaders were...eager to kill him because...he had spoken of God as His Father, thereby making Himself equal with God. Jesus replied... [I] the Son will do far more awesome miracles. ...He [Jesus] will even raise from the dead anyone He wants to, just as the Father does. And the Father leaves all judgment of sin to His Son, so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. But if you refuse to honor God’s Son, whom He sent to you, then you are certainly not honoring the Father.”*  
— John 5:18-23

## DISCUSS

Where does Jesus get His authority to claim to be the judge of all mankind? Why did Jesus insist that people honor Him as much as the Father?

*“Among these Jews there suddenly turns up a man who goes about talking as if He was God. He claims to forgive sins. He says He has always existed. He says He is coming to judge the world at the end of time. Now let us get this clear. Among pantheists, like the Indians, anyone might say that he was a part of God, or one with God; there would be nothing very odd about it. But this man, since He was a Jew, could not mean that kind of God. God, in their language, meant the Being outside the world who had made it and was infinitely different from anything else. And when you have grasped that, you will see that what this man said was, quite simply, the most shocking thing that has ever been uttered by human lips.”*

— C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Not only did Jesus make astonishing statements about His person and authority, but the Bible also records that He did amazing miracles.

## ● CHECK THIS OUT!

*“That day when evening came, He said to his disciples, ‘Let us go over to the other side.’ Leaving the crowd behind, they took Him along, just as He was, in the boat...A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 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 still.”* — Mark 4:35-39

## DISCUSS

What is the significance of Jesus’ authority over nature? How would experiencing a miracle like this affect you?

You may ask whether you can be sure that this and other miracles really happened. Are the writings that record these miracles reliable? One line of evidence that affirms the reliability of the Bible is fulfilled prophecy.

## ● FULFILLED PROPHECY

Jesus fulfilled more than 100 Old Testament prophecies of which 48 were very specific concerning the coming Messiah. These predictions were recorded hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus. Yet He fulfilled them in every detail. The odds of this occurring in any one person’s life are astronomical. A few examples:

### Jesus’ place and manner of birth.

*“O Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are but a small Judean village, yet you will be the birthplace of my king who is alive from everlasting ages past!”* — Micah 5:2 (circa 700 B.C.)

*“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”*  
— Isaiah 7:14 (circa 900 B.C.)

See Matthew 1:18-26 for the fulfillment of these prophecies.

**Jesus’ crucifixion and burial.** *“My strength has drained away like water, and all My bones are out of joint...My tongue sticks to My mouth...they have pierced My hands and feet...they divide My clothes among themselves by a toss of the dice.”*  
— Psalm 22:14-18 (circa 900 B.C.)

“He was buried like a criminal, but in a rich man’s grave; but He had done no wrong and had never spoken an evil word.” — Isaiah 53:9 (circa 900 B.C.)

See Matthew 27:57-60 and John 19:23-24,31-37 for the fulfillment of these prophecies.

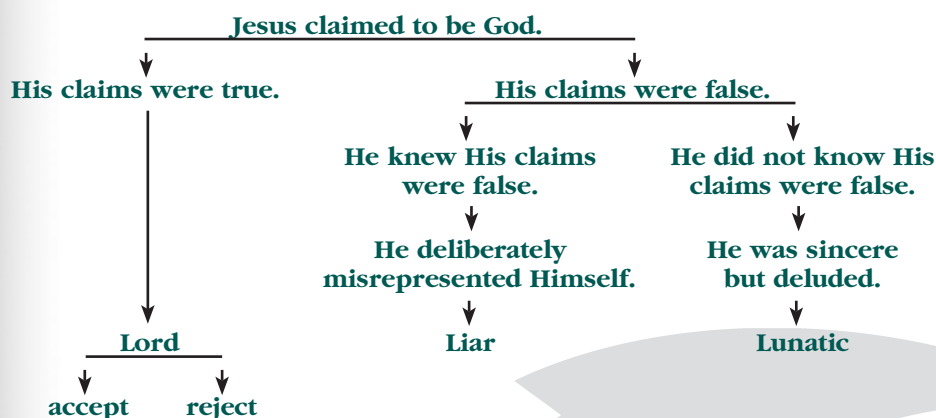
## DISCUSS

What do these fulfilled prophecies suggest to you about Jesus?

### ● THE ALTERNATIVES

Since Jesus said and did things which were beyond the scope of human abilities, we are left with limited possibilities concerning His actual identity. Consider the diagram below.

## THE TRILEMMA



Many would call Jesus a great moral teacher or a prophet. But since He claimed to be God, He only left three options for His identity. Either He was who He said He was, or He was a liar, or He was insane.

“If you had gone to Buddha and asked him, ‘Are you the son of Bramah?’, he would have said, ‘My son, you are still in the vale of illusion.’ If you had gone to Socrates and asked, ‘Are you Zeus?’, he would have laughed at you. If you had gone to Muhammed and asked, ‘Are you Allah?’, he would have rent his clothes and then cut your head off. If you had asked Confucius,

‘Are you Heaven?’, I think he would have probably replied, ‘Remarks which are not in accordance with nature are in bad taste.’ The idea of a great moral teacher saying what Christ said is out of the question. In my opinion, the only person who can say that sort of thing is either God or a complete lunatic suffering from that form of delusion which undermines the whole mind of man.” — C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*

### ● WHAT SOME HAVE SAID ABOUT JESUS

“Tell them about Jesus. He’s real to me.”  
— Columbia astronaut Rick Husband, specifying his final request to NASA in the event of an accident.

“There’s no doubt in my mind that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” — Apollo 16 Astronaut Charles Duke

“Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God.” — Rousseau

“Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and I myself have founded empires; but upon what do these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded his empire upon love; and to this very day millions would die for him.”

— Napoleon Bonaparte

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.” — the Bible

*Is it important to consider who Jesus is and His relevance to your life? Why or why not?*

*Where do people get their ideas about God?*

*How would they know if these sources are reliable?*

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

- *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis
- *More Than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell
- *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel



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