

Who is Jesus?

A basic principle of relationships is that you can only know a person as far as that person reveals him/herself to you. The greatest truth of the Christian message is that God has revealed himself! The clearest way that God has shown us what he is like is in the person of Jesus Christ.

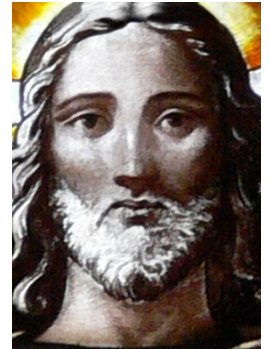
Jesus is God’s way of saying to us, “I want you to know me.”

4 Biographies of Jesus in the Bible

There are four biographies of Jesus in the Bible, called ‘gospels’. They were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Dr. Luke, one of these writers, begins his biography like this:

“Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.” (Luke 1:1-4)



Here are two things these biographies reveal to us about Jesus:

1. Jesus is like us

- He grew up from baby to child to youth to man
- He knew hard work
- He got tired and hungry
- He was tempted to do the wrong thing
- He was rejected by his family
- He was misunderstood
- He knew what it was like to lose someone he loved
- He cried, grieved, partied, laughed, and knew pain

Jesus shows us that God is not some kind of remote being that is totally impersonal or unknowable.

This is what makes a relationship with Jesus today so meaningful. He knows what life is like, with all its stresses and difficulties. He’s someone you can relate to.

Jesus represents to us the God you can know!

But although in many ways Jesus is just like us...

2. Jesus is different to us

Jesus’ claims:

- Jesus claimed to be God. This sets him apart. None of the other great religious leaders of history have ever made this claim. It was this claim that led to Jesus’ execution on the cross.
- Jesus claimed to have the authority to forgive our sins against God.
- He said that he would one day judge our lives.



Topic 5 – Who is Jesus?

Is Jesus' life in line with his claims?

Does his life back up his claims or is there a big credibility gap between his claims to be God and the life he lived? Think about...

- His power over nature (water to wine, feeding the 5,000 people with just a few loaves and fish, raised people from the dead, calmed the storm with a command, healed many people)
- His love, tenderness, compassion, humility
- He forgave people for their sins against God

Our only options when considering Jesus' claim to be God

There are four possibilities:

1. *Liar* – Jesus knew he was not God, and yet purposely deceived people on a massive scale.
2. *Lunatic* – Jesus was not God, but sincerely believed that he was, just like many people today who are in institutions today being treated by psychiatrists because they believe they are Jesus Christ.
3. *Legend* – These stories of Jesus are not true, but built up over the past two thousand years, changing and growing into the legends we have today. This one we should dismiss immediately, because as we saw last week, we have documents recording Jesus' life that were copied just 25 years after they were written down by eyewitnesses. Jesus is no legend that gradually grew.
4. *Lord* – He is who he said he was and his life backs it up.

We want to add another option: good moral teacher, but not God.

But as you can see, this is not an option. If Jesus wasn't God, then his message was either a lie or the ramblings of a lunatic. Neither of those fits with "good moral teacher".

Jesus was indeed a good moral teacher, because he stood for the truth, and the truth was in his claim to be God. You must reject him completely or accept his claims

As author John Dickson put it, "When you look at Jesus, you are staring God in the face."

Discussion questions (pick some to discuss)

- Do your friends have a positive or negative opinion about Jesus?
- If you could somehow meet Jesus now, what question would you like to ask him?
- What surprises you about Jesus?
- The main talk ended with four options of who Jesus is. What did you think of the statement that "good moral teacher" is not an option—that he has to be either God as he claimed, or a fraud or lunatic or legend?
- Do you find it hard to imagine Jesus as a real man?
- Does anything you have heard in the talk change your view of Jesus?
- What feelings do you associate with your thoughts about Jesus?