
Who Is Jesus?

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" Matthew 16:13 (HCSB)

- Jesus was a good teacher.
- Jesus was a prophet.
- Jesus was a caring man.
- Jesus was a powerful leader.
- Jesus was a mythical figure.

What about you?

"But you," He asked them, "who do you say that I am?" Matthew 16:15 (HCSB)

1. Textual Criticism

- a. Determines the historical accuracy of ancient writings.
- b. Applies five criteria to validate any historical documents.
 - i. The date of the original text
 - ii. The date of the manuscript
 - iii. The time lapse between the original and the manuscript copy
 - iv. The number of manuscript copies
 - v. The variations between different manuscript copies

Textual Criticism Comparison

Work	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Time Lapse	# of Copies
Dead Sea Scrolls	200 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,100 yrs.	1,000
Caesar's Gallic War	58–50 B.C.	900 A.D.	950 yrs.	210
Livy's Roman History	59 B.C –17 A.D.	900 A.D.	900 yrs.	150
Tacitus	100 A.D.	1,100 A.D.	1,000 yrs.	33
New Testament	40–100 A.D.	130 A.D. (part) 350 A.D. (full)	30–310 yrs.	5,000+ Greek 10,000 Latin 24,000 Others

If the critics want to disregard the New Testament, then they must also disregard other ancient writings by Plato, Aristotle, and Homer. This is because the New Testament documents are better-preserved and more numerous than any other ancient writings. Because they are so numerous, they can be cross checked for accuracy... and they are very consistent.

~Matt Slick, Manuscript Evidence for Superior New Testament Reliability

In the variety and fullness of the evidence on which it rests, the text of the New Testament stands absolutely and unapproachably alone among ancient prose writings.

~Fenton John Anthony Hort, The New Testament in the Original Greek

2. Who Is Jesus Christ? The Bible portrays Jesus as both fully God and man.

a. Jesus was fully human.

i. Physically:

- Fatigue

Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, worn out from His journey, sat down at the well. It was about six in the evening. John 4:6 (HCSB)

- Hunger and Thirst

After He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, He was hungry. Matthew 4:2 (HCSB)

After this, when Jesus knew that everything was now accomplished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He said, "I'm thirsty!" John 19:28 (HCSB)

ii. Emotionally:

- Sadness

When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at His feet and told Him, "LORD, if You had been here, my brother would not have died!" When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, He was angry in His spirit and deeply moved. "Where have you put him?" He asked. "LORD," they told Him, "come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"
John 11:32-36 (HCSB)

- Anger

They came to Jerusalem, and He went into the temple complex and began to throw out those buying and selling in the temple. He overturned the money changers' tables and the chairs of those selling doves, and would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple complex. Then He began to teach them: "Is it not written, My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a den of thieves!"
Mark 11:15-17 (HCSB)

- Love

Then, looking at him, Jesus loved him and said to him, "You lack one thing: Go, sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me."
Mark 10:21 (HCSB)

iii. Experientially:

- Temptation

He was in the wilderness 40 days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and the angels began to serve Him.
Mark 1:13 (HCSB)

- Learning

After three days, they found Him in the temple complex sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all those who heard Him were astounded at His understanding and His answers. When His parents saw Him, they were astonished, and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for You." "Why were you searching for Me?" He asked them. "Didn't you know that I had to be in My Father's house?" But they did not understand what He said to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.
Luke 2:46-52 (HCSB)

- Work

"Isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren't His sisters here with us?" So they were offended by Him.
Mark 6:3 (HCSB)

- Obedience

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart. Luke 2:51 (HCSB)

b. Jesus was fully God.

i. Jesus' claims about himself:

- I AM the Messiah

But Jesus kept silent. Then the high priest said to Him, "By the living God I place You under oath: tell us if You are the Messiah, the Son of God!" "You have said it," Jesus told him. "But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." Matthew 26:63-64 (HCSB)

- I AM satisfaction.

"I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "No one who comes to Me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty again." John 6:35 (HCSB)

- I AM the only way to God.

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you know Me, you will also know My Father. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him." John 14:6-7 (HCSB)

- I AM the resurrection and the life.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die—ever. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26 (HCSB)

- I AM God.

Jesus said to him, "Have I been among you all this time without your knowing Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, Show us the Father?" John 14:9 (HCSB)

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him LORD and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ~C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

ii. Evidence to support what He said:

- His teaching.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away. Luke 21:33 (HCSB)

- His works.

But if I am doing them and you don't believe Me, believe the works. This way you will know and understand that the Father is in Me and I in the Father. John 10:38 (HCSB)

- His character.

He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth. 1 Peter 2:22 (HCSB)
Matthew 27:19; Luke 23:39-42

- His fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are small among the clans of Judah; One will come from you to be ruler over Israel for Me. His origin is from antiquity, from eternity. Micah 5:2 (HCSB)
Luke 2:1-40

- His resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15

iii. Evidence for the resurrection:

- The Bible records 11 separate appearances by Christ.
- He appeared to 500 people at one time.
- Physical activities of Jesus during a period of six weeks.
- Immediate impact and growth of the church.

3. Because of what Jesus said, we must choose one of four conclusions:

- a. Jesus was a liar.
- b. Jesus was a _____.
- c. Jesus was a legend.
- d. Jesus is _____.

We are faced, then, with a frightening alternative. This man we are talking about either was (and is) just what He said or else a lunatic, or something worse. Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God. God has landed on this enemy-occupied world in human form.

~C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

Suggested Reading:

Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

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