



# Who is Jesus?

By Charles T. Crabtree

# Jesus?

“Who is Jesus?” **That is the most profound, far-reaching, and important question you will ever ask.** The consequences of a wrong answer cannot be calculated. Among them is a lifetime of spiritual lostness, deception and bondage. Beyond this life lies an eternity without God. On the other hand, the consequences of a right answer and a proper response mean a lifetime of truth and freedom and an eternity in God’s presence.

You will notice the question is in the present tense, in itself signaling Jesus’ uniqueness. Every other person who lived so long ago cannot be known in the present tense no matter how wonderful they were. The great personalities of the past, once dead, cannot be known except through their reputation or works of genius.

Jesus is different from them all. He was a great teacher and miracle worker. Even skeptics admit to those things. But the truth is: He is still the great teacher and miracle worker. So when you ask the question “Who is Jesus?” the answer is “He is a living, active, contemporary person.”

Some time ago, I heard about a high school teacher who assigned the topic “The Most Important Person Alive Today” as the basis for an essay. One of the students chose Jesus Christ as his subject and was given an “F.” The teacher argued that though the essay was well written, it did not meet the criteria since Jesus is not alive today. After the student gave the teacher his testimony of how Christ transformed his life, the grade was changed to an “A.”

In order to answer the question “Who is Jesus?” you have a decision to make: to seek human opinion or divine truth.

One of the most fascinating discussions in the Bible took place between Jesus and His disciples (Matthew 16:13-17). Jesus wanted to

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know who people thought He was. The disciples quoted various popular answers — all different and all wrong. Some in the crowds thought Jesus was John the Baptist, others thought He was Elijah, and still others thought He was Jeremiah or one of the prophets — all risen from the dead. (At least they all put Jesus in the category of a religious leader!)

When Jesus had heard people's opinions about who He was, He turned and asked the disciples, "Who do you say I am?" (v. 15, NIV).

I wish I could have been there when Peter, who had been wrong so often, blurted out the right answer: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16).

Jesus replied, "This was not

revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven" (v. 17).

Peter's experience should humble all of us. He did not correctly identify Jesus through his own wisdom. Christ was telling His disciples that even those who were closest to Him — the people who knew Him in the flesh — did not comprehend Him as God in the flesh.

When Mary Magdalene first encountered the risen Christ at the tomb she mistook Him for the gardener. The disciples on the Emmaus Road did not know they were walking with Jesus until He revealed himself.

These experiences explain to a great extent why there is so much confusion in our world about Jesus.

You cannot learn the right answer to the question "Who is

Jesus?" through the normal processes of education or through treatises from the most brilliant minds. They are simply the most informed opinions and best guesses of man. You will get a variety of answers, but all of them will be wrong.

How do we sort through all the clashing and varying opinions about Jesus? How can we know for certain who He really is? How will the Spirit of God reveal the true identity of Christ?

Jesus himself instructs us how to know Him and understand eternal truth. One day He was talking to a group of religious people who took pride in knowing Scripture. He said, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the

Scriptures that testify about me" (John 5:39).

These people were using Scripture for noble reasons but not for the right reasons. They missed the central purpose of the Scriptures — to reveal the God-Man, Jesus.

If you come to the Scriptures with a humble heart seeking Jesus, you will find Him. The Spirit of God will reveal the living Christ through the written Word. He is revealed in Scripture in three dimensions.

The Scriptures reveal who Jesus is in relation to history. He is God, the ultimate truth. He is the living Word who stepped out of the habitation of heaven, the center of the universe, and became flesh through the miracle of the Incarnation.

For approximately 33 years, God in the form of man astounded the teachers of religion by articulating truth like no one ever had before Him. He practiced healing arts by just a word or touch, performed incredible miracles, defied Satan's message, and delivered the tormented from demon power.

He then paid the ultimate sacrifice for sin by dying at Calvary and shedding His blood as the perfect Lamb of God. But on the third day He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures. After proving himself alive in front of more than 500 witnesses over a period of 40 days, Jesus ascended into heaven (attended by angels) to take His place as the mediator between God and man.

The Scriptures reveal the answer to the question "Who is Jesus?" in relation to the present. He is at this moment our great High Priest. In addition, He is the greatest builder in history. He is building His glorious Church at

the very gates of hell. He is also building an eternal residence for every person who believes and trusts in Him. At this moment, Jesus is the sovereign Lord of all creation, including humanity, and possesses all power in heaven and in Earth.

The Scriptures also reveal the answer to the question "Who is Jesus?" in relation to the future. The experience of the disciples when Jesus left the Earth in physical form in a glorified body after His resurrection is most instructive.

As Jesus' followers watched Him ascend and disappear, two angels stood by them and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

In a few words, the angels confirmed the prophetic word that Jesus was going to return from heaven to Earth again. Subsequent Scriptures inform us Jesus Christ will reign as King of kings forever over a new heaven and a new Earth.

At the beginning of this article, I stated that the question "Who is Jesus?" is the most profound, far-reaching, and important question you will ever ask. Who Jesus is to you personally determines the quality of your life now and the destiny of your eternal soul.

You are more than an animal; you are an eternal soul wearing a physical body. You have been made in the image of God. Aren't you glad Jesus is your friend? He is not against you; He is for you. Trust Him. He is the way, the truth, and the life. **tpe**

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## ABCs OF SALVATION

To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:

### A. Admit you are a sinner.

"There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

### Ask God's forgiveness.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

### B. Believe in Jesus (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

### Become a child of God by receiving Christ.

"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

### C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

For further help, contact the Assemblies of God church near you.

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