

# Part 1 - Who is Jesus?

## A Study

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### Looking at Jesus

At Easter we looked at the Cross of Jesus –

- The resurrection of Jesus (arguments against, evidences for)
- Jesus the Lamb of God (the old testament to the new)

Today we will delve into the looking at Jesus – and trying to answer His question to us “Who do you say I am?”

### Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ was a first century Jewish man.

His name is indicative of His ministry:

- “Jesus” – is the Anglicized version of the Greek name “Yesous” (used in the Greek NT)
- “Yesous” is from the OT Hebrew “Jeshua” (or Joshua)
- Meaning – “God delivers or saves His people”
- Christ means “anointed” or “messiah”
- **The anointed one of God come to deliver or save His people**

He was born in a bit of a backward hick town of Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth - a bit like a small, backward country town – bit like Bairnsdale

- where folks have a couch on the front lawn,
- they enjoy a tinny with the kids
- the barrack for Collingwood
- music is both country and western

### A Backgrounder

- Born to a teenage girl, adopted by a blue collar guy (Joseph)
- Lived in general obscurity for most of his first 30yrs

- Spent time with his brothers James/Jude.
- He would have been in good shape, calloused hands,
- He walked a lot and as a labourer would have been a strong guy
- **Note: Isaiah said “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him...”**
- No long hair – that’s a myth
- Very public ministry, and would eventually be put to death

## A Very Simple Resume


- Never married, never had children, never ran a business, never went to UNI, never ran for political office, only travelled a few hundred kms from His home
- Dressed simply; ate simply; had no fixed address – and so was at times homeless
- Yet today He is both the most loved & most hated
- Most widely studied & considered person of all history

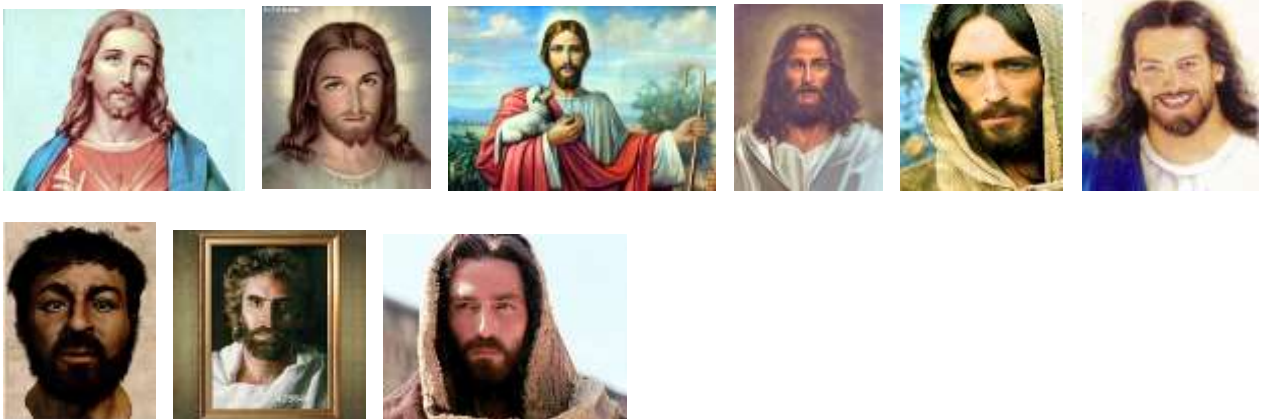
## More of Everything

- More paintings painted, songs sung, books written
- He splits time into BC and AD Anno Domini (Year of our Lord) - (Dan 7 - Change Times)
- Calendars literally rotate around this man!
- Few billion people on planet earth who worship Jesus as God today
- 2 Cor 11:3-4 – Paul warned about lots of split opinions and perspectives about Jesus
- Jesus remains as hot a topic as ever, with lots of variable opinions about Him


The pictures of him that have been created through the years would present a varied array of ideas about Him – many contextualised to the culture of that day.

Meek, mild, soft, strong, happy, glad, pensive, piercing, serious

 Here’s a smattering:



## Typical Jew






 This is what a typical middle eastern, Palestinian Jew would have looked like, at around the time of Jesus:



## Jesus Remains a Compelling Person

- Search for Jesus at Amazon.com = 176,000 books
- Google = around 165 million references

Invite people to tell you who they think the real Jesus is (Newsweek's website "On Faith" did in 2006) they were buried in an avalanche of wildly disparate opinions:

-  ***"We don't know many historical facts concerning Jesus, but apparently he was a rabbi who was an example of compassion. Since then he has been exploited by Christians, particularly Americans."***
-  ***"Jesus is real, in the sense that he exists for those who want him to exist."***
-  ***"Jesus was one of a thousand Jews murdered by the Romans for threatening Roman rule."***
-  ***"Jesus was an enlightened being."***
-  ***"Jesus was a man who was nailed to a tree for saying how great it would be to be nice to people for a change."***

With a recent poll showing that around 70% of Australian think about God or consider themselves spiritually minded ... maybe it's time we started talking about this Jesus.

## Who is Jesus?


So let's talk about Jesus.


# Jesus of Pop Culture


Jesus pops up everywhere in the culture – on t-shirts, TV, movies, music.


- Pops up on the Simpsons from time to time
- SouthPark (normally fighting Satan and Saddam Hussein)
- Dog the Bounty Hunter & Duck Dynasty
- More than 100 movies have been made about His life (Ben Hur, Da Vinci Code, The Passion of the Christ)
- John Lennon of the Beatles said “We’re bigger than Jesus now...”


## What Celebrities Say

 “Jesus was the first socialist, the first to seek a better life for mankind.” — Mikhail Gorbachev (born 1931)

 “In boundless love as a Christian and as a man I read through the passage which tells us how the Lord at last rose in His might and seized the scourge to drive out of the Temple the brood of vipers and adders. How terrific was His fight for the world.” Adolf Hitler

 “I believe that what Jesus and Mohammed and Buddha and all the rest said was right.” John Lennon

 “The story of Jesus is very fascinating. It still has such a tremendous power, even after 2,000 years!” Björn Ulvaeus

 “Jesus isn’t lettin’ you off the hook. The Scriptures don’t let you off the hook so easily. When people say, you know, ‘Good teacher,’ ‘prophet,’ ‘really nice guy’ ... this is not how Jesus thought of himself.” Bono

## Jesus of the Cults

People say that all religions teach the same things – Not about Jesus!

Many of these cults spun out from orthodox Christianity

## Liberal Christian or Emergent movements

- Jesus was a great humanitarian, perhaps the best that’s ever lived
- But not God

## **Jehovah's Witness**

- Is actually the Archangel Michael – just another one of the gods

## **Mormon**

- Polygamist man; half-brother of Lucifer; became one of many gods

## **New Ager**

- Lots of opinions here!
- Mostly congruent with Deepak Chopra
- He is a state of consciousness, an enlightened master, that we all can aspire to

## **Scientologist**

- He was an implant forced upon a Thetan about 1 million years ago

## **Jesus of the Main Religions**

- Buddhists - Jesus was a Buddha type, an enlightened master
- Hindus - enlightened being; another of the gods
- Islam - Isa the prophet, lesser than Mohammed

## **Jesus' Words about Himself**

We've heard what others said about Him, other opinions and perspectives

As we ponder the question "Who is Jesus?" and specifically, "Is Jesus the Only God?" we will give Jesus the opportunity to speak for Himself.

So how about we review what Jesus said about himself. It's important to review His words and understand what he was saying about His own identity.

- 6 aspects of Jesus nature this week
- 6 things next week to finish off

During these talks we will see that Jesus said:

- Repeatedly

- Emphatically
- Consistently
- Unapologetically

“I am the eternal God”

## 1. Jesus Came Down from Heaven

 **John 6:38-42**

***For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.***

***At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? (comment) How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”***

- Isn't this the Jesus we grew up?
- Didn't he play with our kids?
- We know His mum and dad.

He is saying:

- I have come from heaven
- Heaven is my home (the Home of God)
- I'm here visiting earth

This is not NDE.

- Have a peek

Only a handful of religious leaders have laid claim to visiting heaven:

- Mohamad visits Allah – sees Moses and Abraham
- Is told to pray 5 times for day after sneak peek

Jesus is saying

- “I'm superior to every other religious leader, including Mohamad”
- “I don't visit heaven, I'm from heaven!”
- “I've come from heaven to be amongst you”

Great distinctive between all religions and Christianity

- People try to ascend to God through

- Good works
- Morality
- spirituality
- accrual of good karma

But Christianity is God reaching down to man, coming and dwelling amongst us in Love  
Jesus first claim – “I came from heaven”

## 2. Good Man

If you ask people on the street, most will say:

- Jesus was a good man, but He’s not God
- My own thoughts

Q. Is it OK to say that Jesus was a good man and not attribute Him with being God?

Let’s see what Jesus says.

### ***Mark 10:18-19***

***As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good - except God alone.***

Jesus is saying “Why do you call me good?”

He is in fact reminding the guy that all men are sinners.

We’ve all sinned in and failed:

- Impure motives
- Our speech – the things we say
- Our behaviour – how we hurt each other
- Our rejection of God – to live for ourselves

So don't come up to me and call me good –

- because there are none that are good!
- Unless you are calling me God.

In that case, it makes sense to call me good – if you are also identifying me as being God.

Jesus is saying:

- I'm not a just a good citizen of earth
- Another guy doing nice things for people
- I'm much more than that!
- I am in fact God!

### 3. Son of Man

This is essentially about God the Son, coming into the earth as a man.

***Dan 7:13-14***

***“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a SON OF MAN, a coming with the clouds of heaven. (comment) He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.***

So we'll pull that title out of Daniel and analyse it to see what it means.

Who is this person that Daniel is talking about?

- A man who is coming from heaven

He approached the

- Ancient of Days
- That's God the Father

Look at what he is given:

- Authority
- Glory
- Sovereign power – absolute, unlimited power
- Who has all these attributes? A. God does!

Keep going:



- All peoples and all nations will worship Him
- Who gets worship? A. God alone receives worship

Keep going:

- His dominion is an everlasting dominion
- That will not pass away
- And His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed

This is speaking about eternity

It's speaking about a "His" kingdom – it's speaking about a person who is apart from God!

## Who are we talking about?

This is talking about a man who comes from heaven, this **SON OF MAN** who is attributed

- God's power
- authority,
- kingship
- receives worship
- is above all others
- has rule and reign, dominion
- for eternity

SON of MAN is a title that is ascribed to the glorious God.

- The Jews on reading Daniel were waiting for this person

Now step forward into the NT

- Jesus' favourite reference to Himself was: SON OF MAN
- Used over 80 times
- In all 4 gospels

Jesus lifts the title from Daniel – and ascribes it to Himself

He is in essence saying:

- I'm eternal
- I'm the sovereign king with all power and authority
- I'm to be worshipped and adored

## 4. Jesus' Miracles

Next we look at Jesus many miracles

Many other religious leaders have miracles attributed to them –

- But look at what Jesus says about the
- uniquely distinctive miraculous works of His
- Speaks of His supremacy as God
- Supports His very words and His claim to being God

### ***John 10:36-39***

***Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.' Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.***

Blasphemy explained:

When a human being calls themselves God

Jesus said this repeatedly

He was not killed because of His good works

- Nice to kids
- Helped the poor
- Loved the outcasts
- Was killed because he repeatedly committed the crime of blasphemy

The Jews understood it – clearly.

Jesus is saying here “

- Why don't you examine my life,
- study my words,
- my works the miracles support everything I say
- If you don't like my words – look at my miracles

Then ask the question, “Can a mere man do all these works?”

- Speak to storms
- Walk on water
- Call forth dead people
- Heal the blind, deaf and lame

How many people do you know who have authority over the elements?

- Wind
- Waves
- Natural elements (human health, food and fluid)
- Life and Death itself
- Over All things?

Resurrection

- Greatest miracle is that Jesus came out of His own grave

## 5. Jesus Said He was God

Jesus is cool a good man – but Christian's made that up that he was God!

Not so.

- Christian's are narrow.
- That's because Jesus was narrow.

He said "Narrow is that path ... wide is the road ..."

We are a narrow bunch.

Not because we want to be

- harsh,
- intolerant,
- mean or rude

We are narrow because we believe that Jesus is God –

- he said so, over and over again
- if you don't like Christians – blame Jesus!

### 3 Places:

***Mark 14:61***

***Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"***

***"I am," said Jesus.***

Jesus are you saying that you are God?

- What's your answer – he says “Yes, I am”
- That's pretty clear.
- Don't need a UNI degree to see that!

Then he Lifts Daniel prophecy off the page and applies it to himself.

***“And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”***

Look what happens next:

***The high priest tore his clothes. [sign of absolute horror] “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”***

***They all condemned him as worthy of death.***

Next, the book of John:

***John 8:58***

***“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”***

***At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.***

Then,

***John 10:30-33***

***I and the Father are one.”***

***Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, 32but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?”***

***“We are not stoning you for any good work,” they replied, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”***

Christianity is the only religion where its leader claimed to be the eternal God

- Not buddha
- Not Mohamed
- Not Zoraster

- Not Krishna

Not too many people today walking around claiming to be God.

Some have formed cults –

- and they with their few followers have typically died
- alongside their message

## 6. Double Checked on Jesus' Claim

Here the Jewish leaders interrogated Jesus – and

- gave him the opportunity to recant

They asked Him the direct question: What say you? Are you God?

- Perhaps he is confused
- Or we heard it wrong
- Or he is a bad communicator
- Perhaps he has his story back to front

Recorded in Matthew's gospel:

Matthew 26:63-65

***Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent.***

***The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."***

***"You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."***

High priest goes on to say "He has spoken blasphemy!"

Jesus clearly confirms the questioning –

- unequivocally
- Unambiguously
- Emphatically

Declares – I am God!

# What's Your Response Today

Jesus, everyone's gone nuts!

Q&A panel are confused

The Bloggers have lost their minds

**Matt 16:15**

***"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"***

Most important message that we can seek to answer today.

Is Jesus good – or God?

**CS Lewis**

***"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. 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."***

Not answering that question is still an answer – you are saying "Jesus is not God"

The right response, the one

- available to you today
- become a Christian
- Ask Jesus to be your God
- Ask Him to forgive your sins

Nobody knows you better. Nobody loves you more than Jesus.

- He will receive you – like he always does.
- Believe in our hearts. Confess with our mouths.
- Communion – we receive and believe
- Prayer, Praise Worship – we proclaim with our mouths