

Who Is Jesus, Really?

Moving Beyond Our Expectations to the Messiah Who Changes Everything

There is a question that has echoed across centuries, stirred debate among scholars, and quietly unsettled the hearts of ordinary people sitting in ordinary places: ***Who is Jesus?***

It sounds simple. Many of us have been around the name long enough that we assume we already know the answer. But familiarity can be one of the greatest obstacles to genuine revelation. We carry mental images, cultural assumptions, and personal expectations about who Jesus should be, and those assumptions have a way of blinding us to who He actually is.

The disciples experienced this firsthand. In Luke 24, two of them were walking the road to Emmaus, deep in grief and confusion after the crucifixion. Jesus Himself came alongside them and walked with them, and yet they did not recognize Him. The text does not tell us exactly why. But there is a haunting possibility worth sitting with: perhaps they could not see Him because they were looking for someone different? Someone who matched their expectations. Someone who would redeem Israel the way they imagined redemption should look. Instead, they got a Risen Lord who had done something far greater than they had dared to ask for, and they nearly missed Him completely!

We do the same thing.

We reduce Jesus to a miracle worker, a problem solver, a cosmic santa. We approach Him with our lists and our needs, grateful when He delivers and frustrated when He does not. There is nothing wrong with bringing our needs to God. Scripture invites us to do exactly that. But when our entire

understanding of Jesus is built around what He can do for us, we have missed the weight of who He is. We have traded the Messiah for a genie.

The Question He Still Asks

In Matthew 16, Jesus turned to His disciples and asked a question that cuts through every layer of religious assumption: "Who do you say that I am?" Not who do the crowds say. Not what does culture think. Who do YOU say that I am?

Peter's answer was not a list of miracles he had witnessed. It was not a catalog of teachings he had admired. He said, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." The saving one. The Christ. The one who came to rescue all of mankind.

That answer is still the right one. And it is still the one that changes everything.

What He Left Behind

John opens his Gospel not with a birth narrative or a miracle, but with a declaration of identity that reaches back before time itself. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' Jesus was not a figure who appeared on the scene two thousand years ago. He is the one through whom all things were made, the one in whom life itself originates, the light that darkness has never been able to overcome.

This matters enormously! When we understand where Jesus came from, the weight of what He did on the cross becomes immeasurably weightier. John 3:16 tells us that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life.' We recite those words easily. But consider what was given up. The One who existed outside of time, who spoke creation into being, who dwelled in the perfection of eternity, stepped into His own creation. He became vulnerable. He became mortal. He entered the very world He had made, knowing exactly what it would cost Him.

That is not a minor act of generosity. That is the most staggering expression of love in all of history.

The Prophecy That Describes It All

Hundreds of years before the crucifixion, the prophet Isaiah described it with powerful clarity in Isaiah 53. He was despised and rejected. He was familiar with suffering. He had no beauty or majesty that would draw people to Him. He came not as the powerful and polished figure we might have designed, but as someone the world overlooked and dismissed.

And why? Because He did not come to impress the powerful. He came to reach the lowest of the low. He came to make clear that no one is beyond His reach, that no amount of shame or failure or brokenness puts a person outside the scope of His love.

Isaiah tells us that He bore our pain, carried our suffering, was pierced for our transgressions, and crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace fell on Him. By His wounds, we are healed. The picture Isaiah paints is one of substitution. Jesus took our place. He was crucified where we deserved to be and received what we deserved to receive.

He did not deserve any of it. He had committed no sin, spoken no deceit. And yet He went willingly, surrendering in obedience so that the debt we could never repay would be paid in full.

The Greatest Miracle

Three days after His death, He rose again. He defeated death. He conquered sin. He took back what the enemy had claimed and now stands at the right hand of the Father on our behalf.

This is the miracle that gives meaning to every other miracle. Healings are wonderful. Answered prayers are a gift. Provision and protection are real expressions of His care. But none of those things are the foundation. The

resurrection is the foundation. The cross is the foundation. Everything else flows from that.

When the Samaritan woman encountered Jesus at the well in John 4, He revealed things about her life that only God could know. She ran back to her town, and the people came to see for themselves. After spending time with Him, they said something remarkable: "We know that this man really is the Savior of the world." They moved from what He had done to who He is.

That is the journey every believer is invited to take.

The Message We Carry

When we share our faith with others, the most powerful thing we can offer is not a promise that life will become easier or more comfortable. It is the truth that the God of all creation looked at humanity in its brokenness and sin, yet chose to come anyway! He came for the ashamed, the overlooked, the ones who hide from others in the heat of the day. He came for the ones who believe their sin is too great, their failures too many, their worth too small.

He is not the life enhancer. He is Life itself!

He is not merely the gift giver. He is the gift!

The question He asked His disciples, He still asks today. Who do you say that I am? The answer to that question will shape everything, the way you live, the way you love others, and the way you face whatever comes next.