

Topic	Who Is Jesus
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Who is Jesus?

That's a question that has been asked for over 2000 years. People asked it back before the crucifixion and resurrection, they have continued to ask that. They are still asking today. They ask the question; they debate about it and people give various answers. Today we are going to look first of all at answers that were given in the our text, what various people in Jesus's day, still only partway through his ministry, what they thought about who Jesus really was and then we are going to look at how Jesus was continuing to reveal himself to those around him. He would reveal who he was and then he would reveal a little more and then he would come back and reinforce that, so they would understand exactly who he said he was and then after we look at what Jesus said about his identity through what he did and what he said then we want to come back to the question and ask today what are people saying about Jesus and then we will conclude by asking based on who Jesus is how will you respond.

Jesus is not a neutral figure. Every time Jesus appears in scripture, what he says and what he does elicits a response from the people. What he says will call people to make decisions to make choices and today he is still working in the same way. He works in our hearts. He is speaking to us through his Holy Spirit and he is calling for a response from each one of us to who he is.

Before looking at the responses that people gave in the text, let's look just briefly at the background of the passage. It starts of with

John 7:1 After this Jesus went about in Galilee.

If you remember a couple of weeks ago in the sermon, we saw that Jesus was in Galilee and he had fed 5000 people with only 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish and this was such a spectacular miracle that some of the people wanted to take him and make him to be king, a physical, earthly and powerful king that would take care of all of their physical needs. But Jesus got away because that was not his purpose. The people found him and they were asking him where he was and what he was doing and he was saying, you are only here because you want more bread. There is not going to be any more bread guys, you need to be concerned about the type of bread that I can give you that will bring eternal life and then we see because of the some of the hard things that Jesus told the people that many of those who had been following him now had left and there was just him and the 12 and Jesus asked them and they responded, Peter being their spokesman said

John 6:68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, ... You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

So that statement there is the first hint that we have and what we will look at today of who Jesus is. Because when Peter said that Jesus you are the holy one of God, Jesus accepted that statement. The text says that

John 7:1 After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him.

The background is Jesus has gone back to Jerusalem, since like every time he went to Jerusalem he cause a stir and in Jerusalem he healed a man. The problem was he healed the man on the Sabbath, he was working on the Sabbath, he broke a religious law. Worse than that then he claimed that he had the authority to break that law. Basically saying, he was the Lord of the Sabbath and he referred to God as his father. So the Jewish leaders were very angry and they said,

John 5:18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

So both of those things annoyed the Jewish leaders, because somebody was claiming to be God.

7:2 Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand.

When we hear the word feast, we usually think about food, but it was much more than just a time to go eat and have a big party. There were three religious festivals every year that all Israelite males were required to attend in Jerusalem. This feast lasted an entire week, it wasn't just one great big meal, it was a celebration going back to remember what God had done for the people, as he provided for them when they had been freed from slavery in Egypt and then the next 40 years they were going through the desert, wandering there on their way to the promised land and God provided them with food and water and God's presence was evident among them. So they are celebrating and remembering this wonderful time when God had worked in their history.

Jesus's brothers were heading up to the feast. They wanted Jesus to go along with them but Jesus said, no, he was not going to go. Now what is going on here. The brothers had said, come with us and when you go there is where you can do all your miracles. The brothers knew that he had just lost a lot of his followers, a lot of them turned away, so they were trying to give him some marketing advice. Jesus said no, that's not what he was interested in. He was not wanting to draw a large crowd of people who were merely spectators. He wasn't wanting to draw in people who were interested only in what they could get for themselves. He had

another purpose and so he was not going to go in a public way. He knew that if he went with his brothers in a public way, when he got to Jerusalem, one of two things would happen.

- One, the Pharisees will try to kill him and it was not yet his time.
- Two, he was afraid the crowd would mob him, like they tried to after he fed the 5000 and then they would try to make him king of an earthly kingdom and again that was not his goal.

So Jesus said, no I am not going up to the feast, but then later he does, but even before he gets to the feast, we see that the Jewish people were muttering and murmuring and kind of gossiping and they were saving among themselves, who is Jesus, well some said

Joh 7:12 And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, he is leading the people astray."

Now they weren't speaking loud because they too were afraid that the Jewish leaders might get on their case but we have these conflicting opinions, already even before Jesus shows up at the feast. Who is Jesus, some said he is a good man. Basically a positive review of who Jesus was, nothing negative, generally supportive but yet they are still lacking the divine insight. So the insights from scripture to realize that Jesus might be more than just a good man, but then we also see other saying, he is a deceiver. Maybe these people have heard the Pharisees speak, maybe they too were uncomfortable with the fact that Jesus had broken the Sabbath or uncomfortable with the fact that Jesus was claiming that he was divine, that God was his father.

When Jesus finally does show up at the festival, he begins to teach and when he teaches he amazes even the Jewish leaders and this is what they say

John 7:15 The Jews marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, ..."

What it means is that Jesus was well versed in the scripture. So some were saying, not only that he was a good man or a deceiver but others were adding, he is a great teacher as he is well-versed in the scripture but it wasn't long before Jesus offended some people in his teaching and people cried out,

John 7:20 The crowd answered, "You have a demon!"

They mean that Jesus you are lunatic.

John 7:31 Many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?"

This must be the Christ because nobody else can do what this man is doing and a little bit later others were saying

John 7:41 Others said, "This is the Christ."

He is the messiah, the promised one that God would send, the one that prophets have foretold, the deliverer, the savior, the king. So why variety of opinions that people gave answering the question who is Jesus. Now let's look at what Jesus said how he further revealed his identity to the people.

Jesus approaches John and John says

John 1:29 "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John was the messenger who was to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord and when he sees Jesus, he said, this is the one. He will take away your sins

John 1:30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.'

John was referring to the preexistence of Jesus. So shortly after Jesus makes his first appearance and ministry, we see him coming to Jerusalem and when he goes up to Jerusalem he is going to cause a stir like he always did. When he gets to Jerusalem, he goes into the temple, like he owns the place. He acts like he is the one that is in-charge. He acts like, he is the one that can determine what is appropriate worship and what is not. He is the one that has the authority to say, what should or should not happen in the temple and he even calls the temple, his father's house. It is his temple, he is saying. What a claim. I am sure, some of the people that heard and saw what Jesus did, remembered the words of the prophet Malachi when he was saying

Malachi 3:1 "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; ..."

Could Jesus be this one prophesized by Malachi, is he the Lord that is coming. It wasn't long later while still in Jerusalem, Jesus talking to one of the Jewish religious leader said that, if you believe in me as the son of God then you will have eternal life, believing in me Jesus said will result in you being born again and that will open the doors to the kingdom of heaven for you to enter. Again very bold claims by Jesus and then the next time Jesus goes to Jerusalem that is when he healed the man on the Sabbath and so we see all of these audacious claims that Jesus is making to be equal with God. Also we see the events of the ministry that Jesus had in Galilee as Jesus is revealing who he is. He went to a wedding in Cana and while there he changed water into wine, not only was he affirming the sanctity of marriage but he was showing other things. As he turned the water into wine which was the best wine and when you think what makes a wine good, one of the main things is the age of the wine. So Jesus was able to produce the best wine, an aged wine, that shows he is Lord over time. What an incredible claim! He is lord over time. Plus, the approaching Messianic Kingdom was characterized in the minds of the people as being filled with an abundance of wine. So they are seeing Jesus as lord over time,

Jesus is the one who might be ushering in the new messianic age. We have already mentioned in Galilee his ministry with the 5000 and how he made these claims afterwards, saying that if you receive me, if you partake of me that will bring eternal life and I will raise you up on the last day. He has power to give life, power to raise people back to life on the last day. So Jesus is very clearly claiming to be God and this was understood not only by his friends. This was understood by his foes, by his enemies.

John 7:7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.

Jesus is saying that one thing he does is that he exposes sin. When the presence of Jesus is there, anything else will fall short of his glory. Sin will be exposed. This is very similar to what Jesus has said earlier

John 3:19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light

So here in chapter 7, Jesus saying the same thing. The world hates me because he is the light that shines the light on the sin of people. Jesus brothers told him

John 7: 3 "... go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. 4 For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world."

But Jesus does not take their bait. Jesus shows to his brothers that his life is 100% in sync with the will of God. If God tells him to go to Jerusalem, he will go, if God doesn't tell him to go to Jerusalem he will not go and his understanding, his relationship to God is so perfect, there is no misunderstanding. He knows what God wants and when God wants it and so he is not following for his brothers marketing advice. He is not interested in these crowds that might just be superficial coming, only for miracles. He is not here on earth to put on a show, to gather curious bystanders but rather he has come to give his life as a sacrifice for sin. He has come to reconcile people to God. So Jesus time was in God's hand and we see that in verse 6 when Jesus said

6 Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come,

Jesus was referring to the climax, the culmination of his ministry on earth. At the end of his earthly ministry, he would enter Jerusalem one final time during Passover week as the Passover lamb but on that entrance it would not be in secret like this time was but it would be open with large throngs of people singing praise and recognizing and acclaiming him as the messiah but at that time he would then be crucified, his life being sacrificed as the Passover lamb for forgiveness of sin and then he would be raised from the dead and he would then ascend back to God. So Jesus knew why he had come to earth and he was not afraid to go into danger. He

was willing to follow God's will, even at the risk of harm and death but he knew it, it was not yet time to make this final sacrifice. He still had more teaching to do, more works to do. His disciples needed some more training. So we see Jesus by what he is telling his brothers here, is saying that his timing, his actions are 100% in sync with what God wants him to do and he is not going to let himself be pressured by peers or even family, who are trying to influence him to do something that is not in God's will.

Jesus revealed that his teaching is not really his teaching but it is God's teaching.

John 7:16 Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me.

Jesus also claims that his authority comes from God

John 7:18 The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.

So Jesus said, my authority is God's authority. He also says, he has come only to seek the glory of God, not the selfishly try to win the acclaim of man and he also said, there is no falsehood in him. What he says is truth. How he lives is truth. There is no unrighteousness in him and just by looking at this passage of how Jesus talks about himself and his teaching we can see a good contrast with those who might be false teachers because the false teachers do seek their own glory and often their own wealth to go with it. False teachers will not always speak the truth and often times false teachers do have unrighteousness in their life. So Jesus is claiming, his authority is from God, that what he says is true and what he is doing brings glory to God and then Jesus goes on to say that he knows God intimately because he was come from God.

John 7:28 And I have not come from myself, but the one who sent me is true, whom you do not know. 29 I know him, because I am from him and he sent me."

Again a very strong and provocative statement from Jesus because first of all he is saying, you folks, even your religious leaders do not truly know God. They might be doing the right rituals but their heart is far from God. You are not in a personal relationship with God. There is something missing in your relationship with God. You don't know him. By contrast, Jesus says he knows God and he knows him intimately and personally. Because he has come from God. He has been with God in heaven from before the foundation of the earth. He is the preexistent son of God, active with God in creation, now sent by God to earth for the purpose of bringing people into a relationship with God. For the purpose of helping people to come to know God in a personal way through faith. Of course, Jesus knew God. He came from God. Not only did he come from God, Jesus also makes the claim, he is going back to God

John 7:33 Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. 34 You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come."

Now this frustrated the religious leaders. The only thing they might be thinking of, Jesus must be going to the gentiles because they knew that's the place they would never go and if Jesus went to the gentiles they would not follow him, they would not find him. Jews considered themselves superior over gentiles.

Even though Jesus did not go onto the gentiles, that's exactly where he is sending his followers to go. After his crucifixion and resurrection, he tells his followers, you are to go to the gentiles, you are to teach people that come from a different ethnic background than you, from a different religious background from you, go where other people have not heard, go outside your comfort zone. So it is almost prophetic in what the Jewish leaders are saying. Jesus was talking about his upcoming crucifixion and resurrection that will be happening maybe six months down the road. This was so confusing that not even the disciples understood and this thought comes up again and again and it is not until chapter 16 that the disciples really understand what Jesus means when he said where I am you cannot come. Because Jesus tells his disciples that in John 16

John 16:28 "I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

So with everything that we have seen Jesus say and do in this passage, as well as everything we have seen him say and do earlier, you can see why the religious leaders considered Jesus to be a threat. He was claiming to have more authority than they. He was claiming to know God better than they. He was claiming to be the Messiah. He was claiming to be the son of God. He was claiming to be divine and these claims continue throughout the rest of his ministry. In the next chapter for instance he claims that he has power to forgive sins, but only God can forgive sins. In the next chapter he also uses the divine name, 'I am' to describe himself. A very clear statement of who he says he is. So clear that the Pharisees then picked up stones, they want to stone him to death and kill him and jump into the end of the gospel of John, after the crucifixion and resurrection when Jesus appears to his disciples, Thomas. His response was, My Lord and my God and Jesus received his worship. People bowed down to Peter in the Book of Acts, he said don't do that I am just a man. People bowed down to Paul also in the book of Acts, he said don't do that I am just a man, worship God only. Jesus when confronted with the statement of faith, you are my lord and my God, Jesus accepted the worship. Not only did he accept the worship, he commended the worship and he said, this response is what true faith really is.

So now doubt about it, Jesus is claiming divinity. Jesus is God, God the son, God come into flesh in order to provide forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with God, a meaningful fulfilled life here on this earth, as well as, eternity with God in heaven after this life is over.

We have seen what some of the early people thought in Jesus day, we have heard in seeing in many of the things that Jesus said about himself. What about today?

Today people are very similar to what were before. The four responses are about the only serious theories you can come up with if you are really trying to search and find out who Jesus is and of these possibilities one is totally impossible, two I think are highly improbable and only one seems to be the most logical answer.

1. Jesus as A Good Man:

Many people say this. The third president of the United States said, Jesus was a great guy, but that president took scissors and he cut out parts of the bible, the New Testament that he disagreed with. He then compiled his own Bible and there was absolutely nothing miraculous in it about Jesus. Well he is not looking at who Jesus is, he is looking at who he wishes Jesus was because he wants to say Jesus is a good teacher but he cannot reconcile Jesus being a good teacher with everything that Jesus said and thought.

2. Jesus As A Prophet:

Well he did bring a message from God but a prophet will bring a true message from God and as we have seen over and over again, Jesus claimed again and again that he is the son of God. If he was a prophet, he must have been a false prophet or else he is more than a prophet. So you can't say he is just merely a good man, merely a good teacher who taught exquisite things, who lived a good life. No, if you look at what Jesus taught, unless you throw out over half of it, you won't come up with the idea that he was just a good teacher and leave it there. There is got to be more. So we can pretty much cross that one out.

3. A deceiver:

A Scottish Presbyterian minister said,

"Christ either deceived humankind by a conscious fraud, or was deluded, Or He was divine. There is no getting out of that trilemma!"

So the second and the third theory are very similar to each other. Either way deception is going on. It shows that Jesus is guilty of trying to deceive people. But there are problems with this, how could a person who is purposely lying or totally delusional, how can this square with the life and the teachings of Jesus. In our story from John 7, the Pharisees wanted to arrest Jesus and they sent guards to arrest him, later in the chapter we will see the guards came back and they didn't have Jesus and their leader say, where is he, why didn't you bring him and they said, nobody has taught like him. This man must be from God.

When you look at Jesus's teachings. These teachings have inspired people, given people hope, given people life, given people peace, meaning in life, love. These teachings have impacted so many people from so many varied backgrounds over so many centuries. He didn't come trying to gain power. He was not a military leader, a political leader, but he lived a life of sacrificial service, showing deeds of compassion and mercy and the people that knew him best, that knew

the truth about him, even the judge that tried him before his crucifixion found no fault in him. So it is highly unlikely that a deceiver or a lunatic could teach like Jesus taught for three years or could live a life like Jesus did publically for so many years.

4. Jesus is who he said he is, he is the Messiah, the son of God.

So based on who Jesus is, how will you respond. Who do you say Jesus is, who is Jesus to you. Not that you have the freedom to make up your own Jesus but looking at the true historical facts about Jesus, what does he mean to you, how have you responded to him personally and really there are only two choices, you either believe in him or you do not. There is no middle ground. Jesus has already shown us that there is no middle ground. Jesus said, whoever believes on the son of God is not condemned but whoever does not believe is already condemned, no middle ground. Jesus also said, if you are not for me, you are against me. If you are having trouble deciding who Jesus is, maybe you are a seeker, maybe you are just getting started and you are wanting to learn more about Jesus and you haven't really understood or decided who Jesus is, consider these words of Jesus

John 7:17 If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God

Basically Jesus is saying, if you want to know the truth, you need to be committed to doing God's will. If you want to make a proper decision with good discernment that's only going to happen if you are committed to doing God's will.

Who is Jesus, your answer is going to be largely based on whether you are willing to do God's will, no matter what that is. There are really only two options, we mentioned earlier believe or not believe. The same thing is said, but using different words in John chapter 1 whether we see the responses to either not receive, reject or to receive.

John 1:11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

What does it mean to receive Jesus?

To receive Jesus means to receive Jesus. Some people think they are receiving Jesus but they are receiving a figment of their imagination, because they say, Jesus is out there to help me get a job and help me to make more money and help me to be successful and help me to meet my goals, Jesus is there to be my servant to do what I want him to do. Therefore, Jesus I receive you, get to work buddy. You have not received Jesus, you are receiving a figment of your imagination. Other people may not be quite so self-centered, I like this about Jesus but I don't like that. I want a comforter but I don't want a king, I want a helper but I don't want a master, I want a deliverer but I don't want a lord. Tim Keller says that

To receive Jesus is an all or nothing proposition.

When Jesus comes in we receive a Messiah, Messiah is the anointed one, who was anointed, kings were anointed. He is the king; we bow down before him. He is the one that brings us to God. We receive not just a good man, we receive someone who is a son of God, God incarnate. He is our Lord, our master, our king. He is our savior, we confess our sin, we repent, we receive Jesus who he claims to be, we received him as he really is.

When we come to faith in Jesus, we need to constantly be reexamining our life, it is not a one-time thing but his lordship, his rule over our life continuous daily and sometimes we tend to resist his lordship but we want to be willing to submit ourselves daily, being willing to go outside our comfort zone, being willing if the Lord calls us to be missionary, being willing to live a lifestyle of righteousness that will bring glory to God. It is all or nothing thing. Jesus is who he said he is. He is lord, master and king.