



ELEUTHERIA COMMUNITY

Who Is Jesus?

An honest look at the most talked about man in history

FIRST STEPS · PART ONE OF THREE

Before you read

Everyone has an opinion about Jesus. A good teacher. A prophet. A myth. A man who existed but has been exaggerated over time.

This is not an attempt to argue you out of what you already think. It is simply an invitation to look at what is actually written about Him, in His own words and in the accounts of the people who knew Him, and to let that speak for itself.

Come with whatever questions you already have. Everyone is welcome here, wherever you are starting from.

01

The One Who Was Promised

Centuries before Jesus was born, Jewish prophets were already describing Him. A ruler born in a small, unremarkable town. A child who would somehow also be called Mighty God and Everlasting Father.

This is not one prediction. It is a pattern, written across hundreds of years by different people, all pointing towards the same coming figure. Whatever else you make of Jesus, that alone is worth pausing on.

ISAIAH 9:6

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

MICAH 5:2

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.

The One Who Came

John's Gospel opens with a claim that is almost too large to take in quickly. The Word, God Himself, became flesh. Not a messenger sent from God. God, in a body, walking among the people He made.

His name Immanuel means God with us. Not God watching from a distance. With us. That is the claim Christianity actually makes, and it is worth sitting with rather than rushing past.

JOHN 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

JOHN 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

MATTHEW 1:23

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

The One Who Loved

Whatever you decide about who Jesus was, the accounts of how He treated people are strikingly consistent. He was moved by the crowds rather than irritated by them. He touched people everyone else avoided.

He said He had not come to be served, but to serve. In a world that has always run on status and power, that is still a strange thing for anyone claiming to be God to say.

MATTHEW 9:36

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

MARK 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

The One Who Taught

People noticed something different in the way Jesus taught. Not quoting other authorities the way the religious teachers of His day did, but simply speaking as one who had authority Himself.

And His claims were not modest. He said He was the way, the truth and the life, not a way among many. That is either the most audacious thing anyone has ever said, or it is true. It is worth deciding which, rather than leaving it unexamined.

JOHN 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

MATTHEW 7:28-29

And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

05

The One Who Died

Jesus was executed by crucifixion, a fact accepted by essentially every serious historian, religious or not. What Christians believe is what that death meant. Not a tragedy that overtook Him, but a gift He chose to give.

The New Testament describes it as God proving His love, doing for us what we could never do for ourselves. His last recorded word from the cross was not a cry of defeat. It was finished. Completed. Paid.

ROMANS 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

JOHN 19:30

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

The One Who Rose

This is the claim the entire Christian faith stands or falls on. Not that Jesus' teaching lived on in memory, but that He was physically, bodily raised from the dead three days later.

His followers did not expect this. They were hiding in fear when it happened. Something changed those same frightened people into people willing to be killed rather than deny what they said they had seen. That transformation is itself worth reckoning with.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

LUKE 24:5-6

Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee,"

The One Who Invites You

Whatever you have made of everything above, here is where it lands. Jesus is not distant, and He is not waiting for you to clean yourself up first. He is described as standing at the door, knocking, and simply asking to be let in.

That is the whole invitation. Not a set of rules to master before you qualify. A door, and a knock, and a choice that is entirely yours to make.

JOHN 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

REVELATION 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

A PRAYER

If you want to respond

There is no required wording, and nobody is watching to see if you get it right. If you want to, you could pray something like this, in your own words.

Jesus, I don't have this all figured out, but I believe You are who You said You are.

Thank You for loving me and for what You did on the cross.

I want to know You. Come into my life, and help me follow You from here.

Amen.

If you just prayed that and meant it, welcome. That is not a small thing, and you should tell somebody.

Where to go from here

This is the first of three short books, and they are meant to be read in order.

If you have just prayed that prayer, or if you think you might be close to it, the next book was written for exactly the week you are now in. It is called *You Said Yes. Now What?* and it covers the nine things nobody tells you at the beginning. What actually happened to you. Why you are not alone anymore. How to pray when you have never prayed. What to do with a Bible you have never opened. Baptism, and why the first Christians made such a point of it.

After that comes *Thirty Days in Matthew*, which walks you through a whole Gospel one short passage a day, with the earliest Christians as your companions.

All three are free. You can download them from our website, or ask us and we will send them to you.

PART ONE	Who Is Jesus?	<i>You are holding it.</i>
PART TWO	You Said Yes. Now What?	<i>Your first steps, nine short chapters.</i>
PART THREE	Thirty Days in Matthew	<i>A whole Gospel, one month, with the early church alongside you.</i>



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has brought you here, there is a place for you in the room.*

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