

RANDY ALCORN

IT'S ALL ABOUT  
JESUS



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To my five wonderful grandchildren,  
who your Grams and I love with all our hearts

*Jake Stump*, may you depend on Jesus always and live in a way that others want to know him.

*Matt Franklin*, may you touch others with the love of Jesus, giving them reasons to believe in him.

*Ty Stump*, may you boldly declare your love for Jesus and put him first in all you do.

*Jack Franklin*, may you use your God-given creative gifts and imagination to glorify King Jesus.

*David Franklin*, may you love Jesus always and be his shining light that points the way to him.

Guys, I look forward, by the grace of Jesus, to one day—after the resurrection—walking with each of you on God’s New Earth! When Grams and I leave this world, it will not be the end of our relationship with you, just an interruption. A great reunion awaits us in a far better world! Meanwhile, may our lives and yours be ALL ABOUT JESUS!

Pops

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## PART 1

# The Nature and Attributes of Jesus

This precious Book, God's Word, tells us of one who resigned the throne and crown of heaven, exchanged the radiant robe of the universal King for the garment of a servant, descended to death, condescended to human want and woe and wickedness, lay in a lowly cradle in a cattle stall at Bethlehem, and hung upon a cross of shame of Calvary, that even those who crucified Him might be forgiven. Can you span the chasm between the throne of a universe and that cross? A crown of stars and a crown of thorns? The worship of the host of heaven and the mockery of an insulting mob?... There is nothing like it in history, not even in fable.

How can we understand? A man with human infirmities, without human sin or sinfulness; poor, yet having at His disposal universal riches; weak and weary, yet having the exhaustless energy of God; unable to resist the violence and insults of His foes, yet able to summon legions of angels at a word or wish; suffering, yet incapable of anything but perfect bliss; dying, yet Himself having neither beginning of days or end of years?

**A.T. Pierson**





If you're told you're going to meet someone important whom your friends know, you naturally ask them, "Who is he? What's he like? Where did he come from? What does he do? Is he the real deal? Does he live up to expectations?"

Because no other historical figure is as widely known, multitudes live with the illusion that they really *know* Jesus, when in reality they simply have various impressions *about* him. Impressions are not knowledge. They are a random collection of data picked up from family, friends, books, movies, articles, social media, and in some cases, experiences with churches or professing Christians. Many of these sources are either completely wrong, mostly wrong, or mostly right but with significant errors.

As a result, it is hard to imagine any subject more fraught with confusion, misinformation, and deception than the subject of who Jesus really is. And what a quandary! *The most important person who has ever lived is also the most misunderstood.* People often quote him—"Judge not," or "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do," for instance—without understanding the context of his words, thereby entirely "missing" his meaning.

Thoughts flow the moment we hear the name *Jesus Christ*. The question is, which thoughts are true, and which are false? Even more important than his teachings on life and ethics is who Jesus actually claimed to be. As Kevin DeYoung has said, "Just about everybody in America likes Jesus, but few like him for who he truly is."

The doctrines of the deity and humanity of Christ, with all their implications, are vitally important not only to sound doctrine but to loving our Savior and Lord by seeing him more accurately. We are all theologians. The only issue is whether

we're good ones or bad ones. Wouldn't you rather be a *good* one—especially when it comes to believing what's true about Jesus?

Sadly, many religious professionals deny Christ's deity, miracles, atonement, and/or resurrection and view the Gospel accounts as myth and distortion. To them, "the historical Jesus" was merely a moral teacher and example that the church turned into a god, falsely claiming that he performed miracles and was superhuman. These skeptical scholars suppose the Gospel accounts and the New Testament letters to be a human invention and argue that the church elevated Jesus to a divine status he never claimed. (This raises the question of why all the apostles were tortured, and every one of them but John died for what they believed. No one endures that kind of suffering for what they know to be a lie.)

Scripture itself, however, presents Christ not as myth, but history. It emphasizes the role of eyewitnesses. Seeking the historical Jesus while denying the Bible is like seeking to know what happened at Gettysburg while denying the historical records from Gettysburg.

Our faith in Christ is only as good as the authentic reality of the Christ we believe in. It shouldn't surprise us, then, that Satan will attack us by promoting false and unworthy views of the person and work of Jesus.

Peter wrote sobering warnings about those who give false portrayals of Jesus (2 Peter 2:1-3). The worst and most dangerous heresies misrepresent Jesus Christ, denying the truths about him and making him out to be less than he really is.

The apostle John also warned about misrepresentations of the Jesus he knew so well:

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God (1 John 4:1-3 NIV).

Since nothing is more important than who Jesus is and what he has done, naturally

there are no greater truths—and in turn, no more pernicious and destructive heresies—than those concerning Jesus. If Jesus did not live, if he was not God, if he was not the Creator but merely one of the created, or if Jesus was not really a man, the consequences would be devastating in the lives of literally billions of people who have believed the words he spoke and the Bible’s teachings about him.

Biblical Christianity is not simply a religion *about* Christ but a relationship *with* Christ. If we get it right about Jesus, we can afford to get some minor things wrong. But if we get it wrong about Jesus, in the end it won’t matter what else we get right.

This is why I am starting this section with the greatest question Jesus ever asked anyone: “Who do you say I am?” Because our answer to that question, whether silent or spoken, is the single most important answer we will ever give.

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## Who Do You Say I Am?

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.” **Matthew 16:13-17 NIV**

If you find it hard to believe in God, I strongly advise you to begin your search not with philosophical questions...but with Jesus of Nazareth. **John Stott**

Who is Jesus Christ? You’ve never met him in person, and you don’t know anyone who has. But there is a way to know who he is. How? Jesus Christ—the divine Person revealed in the Bible—has a unique excellence and a spiritual beauty that speaks directly to our souls and says, “Yes, this is truth.” It’s like seeing the sun and knowing that it is light, or tasting honey and knowing that it is sweet. **John Piper**

Among the Jews there suddenly turns up a man who goes about talking as if He was God...Among Pantheists anyone might say that he was a part of God, or one with God: there would be nothing very odd about it. But this man, since He was a Jew, could not mean that kind of god. God, in their language, meant the Being outside the world Who had made it and was infinitely different from anything else. And when you have grasped that, you will see that what this man said was, quite simply, the most shocking thing that has ever been uttered by human lips. **C.S. Lewis**

The claims of Jesus are so startling that they...challenge us to make up our minds about this most remarkable person. Was he just a great teacher or was he much more? **Michael Green**

Everyone who comes in contact with Jesus has rendered a judgment on him. Even ignoring him is a decision about his identity. **Kevin DeYoung**

Reared in a carpenter shop...this young man gathered disciples about Him, and proclaimed Himself the Messiah. He taught and performed miracles for a few brief months and then was crucified; His disciples were scattered and many of them put to death; His claims were disputed, His resurrection denied and His followers persecuted; and yet from this beginning His religion spread until hundreds of millions have taken His name with reverence upon their lips and millions have been willing to die rather than surrender the faith which He put into their hearts. How shall we account for Him? "What think ye of Christ?" It is easier to believe Him divine than to explain in any other way what He said and did and was. **William Jennings Bryan**

The real question is not what are we to make of Christ, but what is He to make of us? The picture of a fly sitting deciding what it is going to make of an elephant has comic elements about it. **C.S. Lewis**

It takes a fantastic will to unbelief to suppose that Jesus never really "happened," and more to suppose that he did not say the things recorded of him—so

incapable of being “invented” by anyone in the world at that time... We must therefore either believe in Him and in what He said and take the consequences; or reject Him and take the consequences. **J.R.R. Tolkien**

The most important question in anyone’s life is the question asked by poor Pilate in Matthew 27:22: “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?” No other question in the whole sweep of human experience is as important as this. It is the choice between life and death, between meaningless existence and life abundant. **Dale Evans Rogers**

After six years given to the impartial investigation of Christianity, as to its truth or falsity, I have come to the deliberate conclusion that Jesus Christ was the Messiah of the Jews, the Saviour of the world, and my personal Saviour. **Lew Wallace**

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The battle for human souls pivots on the issue of Christ’s identity. He’s the watershed, the dividing line between Hell and Heaven. Who do you believe, in your mind and deep in your heart, that he really is? Every person must give an answer—and whether our answer is right could not be more consequential or eternally significant. **Randy Alcorn**

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## Christ’s Dual Nature: Fully God and Fully Human

God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets... As a man, he was born from the family of David. But through the Spirit of holiness he was declared to be God’s Son with great power by rising from the dead. **Romans 1:2-4 NCV**

In Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. **Colossians 2:9 NLT**

“I and the Father are one.” **John 10:30 NIV**

In order that the body of Christ might be shown to be a real body, he was born



of a woman; but in order that his Godhead might be made clear he was born of a virgin. **Thomas Aquinas**

He who is over all, the blessed God, has been born; and having been made man, he is still God forever. **Hippolytus of Rome**

God has landed on this enemy-occupied world in human form... The perfect surrender and humiliation was undergone by Christ: perfect because He was God, surrender and humiliation because He was man. **C.S. Lewis**

Jesus Christ: the condescension of divinity, and the exaltation of humanity. **Phillips Brooks**

Jesus became as like us as God can be. **Donald English**

Christ's humanity is the great hem of the garment, through which we can touch his Godhead. **Richard Glover**

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Jesus is God spelling himself out in language that men can understand. **S.D. Gordon**

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Remember, Christ was not a deified man, neither was he a humanized God. He was perfectly God, and at the same time perfectly man. **Charles Spurgeon**

Here are two mysteries for the price of one—the plurality of persons within the unity of God, and the union of Godhead and manhood in the person of Jesus. On these two mysteries, all else hangs. **J.I. Packer**

Attribute true and proper divinity to Christ. Attribute true and proper humanity to Christ. Do not so mingle the human and divine that you end up with a being neither human nor divine. Do not dissect Christ so that there are two persons in one being. **Ed Goodrick**

The gospel isn't the gospel if Jesus wasn't God or wasn't man. **Randy Alcorn**

If Jesus Christ is not true God, how could he help us? If he is not true man, how could he help us? **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

He was God and man in one person, that God and man might be happy together again. **George Whitefield**

We...confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; the same perfect in Manhood; truly God and truly Man, in all things like unto us without sin...existing in two natures without mixture, without change, without division, without separation; the diversity of the two natures not being at all destroyed by their union, but the peculiar properties of each nature being preserved...not parted or divided into two persons, but one Lord Jesus Christ. **The Council of Chalcedon**

As human voice and instrument blend in one harmony, as human soul and body blend in each act of feeling, thought, or speech, so, as far as we can know, divinity and humanity act together in the thought and heart and act of the one Christ. **Archibald Alexander Hodge**

I know He was hungry, and I know that with five loaves He fed five thousand. I know He was thirsty, and I know that He turned the water into wine. I know he was carried in a ship, and I know that He walked on the sea. I know that He died, and I know that He raised the dead. I know that He was set before Pilate, and I know that He sits with the Father on His throne. I know that He was worshipped by angels...And truly some of these I ascribe to the human, and others to the divine nature. For by reason of this He is said to have been both God and man. **John Chrysostom**

The Christ was twofold: man is what was seen, but God is what was not seen. As man, he truly ate as we do...As God, he fed the five thousand with five loaves. **Cyril of Jerusalem**