

JESUS CHRIST

Who is Jesus Christ?

Among everyone who has walked the earth throughout all human history, Jesus Christ stands out as utterly unique.

* *His birth was unique.* Jesus is the only person ever born of a virgin. This is because He had no human father. He was conceived through the work of the Holy Spirit, and His father was God Himself (Luke 1:26-35).

* *His life was unique.* Jesus is the only person who never committed a single sin (1 Peter 2:22). He lived a life of perfect love and righteousness. Even His enemies could find no substantive charge to bring against Him (Mark 14:55).

* *His words were unique* (John 7:46). Though untrained and from a little-known family in a small town, Jesus debated and refuted the most highly regarded scholars of His day (Luke 20:26,40). The people who heard Him speak recognized a unique wisdom and authority in His voice (Matthew 7:28-29). Though He wrote nothing, Jesus' words have been recorded and reproduced in more languages and have sold more copies than any other book ever written. His words have stood the test of time, changing individual lives, influencing nations, and guiding whole civilizations for almost 2000 years.

* *His deeds were unique.* Jesus did things no man before or since has done (John 21:25). He performed miracles of every sort, showing His power over disease (Matthew 4:23), over Satan and demons (Luke 11:14), over the forces of nature (Mark 4:39-41), even over death itself (John 11:43-44).

* *His death was unique.* Being perfectly righteous, Jesus was the only person whose death was wholly avoidable and

undeserved. Though He didn't have to die, Jesus chose to suffer a shameful and torturous death on the cross, dying in our place (Philippians 2:6-8). His death wrought changes in the heavens (Matthew 27:45), on the earth (Matthew 27:51-53) and in the hearts of men (Matthew 27:54).

* *His resurrection was unique.* Jesus did not remain dead, but came forth out of the tomb on the third day. He alone conquered death, bursting its bonds and asserting His authority over it (Revelation 1:18). After forty days, He ascended bodily into Heaven (Acts 1:9-11). He lives and reigns forevermore (1 Peter 3:22)!

* *His place in history is unique.* No individual ever had greater influence upon the course of history. No name has inspired more acts of heroism, mercy and devotion. Jesus' birth marks the dividing line of history, for after His coming nothing has been the same.

Who is this man called Jesus, unique in so many ways?

I. JESUS CHRIST IS GOD.

Christianity is the only religion whose founder not only claimed to show the way to God, but actually claimed to *be* God. Indeed, He is the only man who could make such a claim and be believed. Only His divinity serves to explain all about Him that is unique.

Before His birth in Bethlehem, Jesus, the Son of God, existed eternally with the Father in heaven (John 1:1-2). His birth to Mary marked His entrance into the world as a man, not the beginning of His life (John 8:58). His life had no beginning, for there was never a time when He did not exist. Before all worlds were created, before time itself, from all eternity the Son of God was there.

Not only did Christ exist before the worlds were made, it was through Him that they were brought into being (John 1:3). Christ is the eternal Word of God through whom creation was spoken into existence. He is both Creator and Sustainer of all things (Colossians 1:16-17).

Jesus claimed a special relationship with God the Father, a unity that could only mean that He, too, was divine (John 10:30,38). He claimed for Himself the authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:5-7), and accepted worship that is due God alone (John 9:38). For these things He was put to death as a blasphemer (John 19:7), and He refused to save Himself by denying that He was more than a man (Luke 22:70).

Jesus' disciples came to recognize His divinity, and offered Him their worship (Luke 24:52) and obedience. They gave their lives to make Him known to the world. Countless Christians since have believed their testimony, and have come to know for themselves that Jesus Christ is God (John 20:31).

II. JESUS CHRIST IS HUMAN.

The incarnation is perhaps the most incredible miracle imaginable. The eternal God actually became a man and walked the earth He had spoken into existence (John 1:14). The Creator entered into His creation, and became a part of it.

This was not a pretense or a charade. God did not just put on the disguise of a man. He actually entered into and experienced real human life (Hebrews 2:17). He was born into the world a helpless infant, and grew from childhood into adulthood. He laughed and cried, He worked and played, He grew tired and rested. He felt the full range of emotions all human beings are subject to: sorrow and joy, fear and frustration, love and anger.

As a man, Jesus experienced everything you and I experience in this life. Even though He never sinned, He still suffered the consequences of the sins of others. He knew disappointment, rejection and betrayal. He faced every temptation

that we face, and to an even greater degree, for He resisted unto the end (Hebrews 4:15).

As a real man, Jesus died a real death. The cross He hung upon had real splinters. Real nails pierced His flesh and held Him there. Real blood spilled from His veins and dripped to the earth. Jesus lived as a man, and died as a man.

Through man sin came into the world, bringing death with it (Romans 5:12). Through another Man sin was conquered by righteousness, and death replaced with life (Romans 5:16-18). Who was this Man? The Man who was God, the God who was Man, the God-Man Jesus Christ.

III. JESUS CHRIST IS SAVIOR.

The angel who appeared to Mary and told her of her coming childbirth said that she was to name her child "Jesus" (Luke 1:31). The name means "the Lord saves," for Jesus was to be the One through whom God would save mankind from the destruction of sin. Jesus was also given the title "Christ," meaning "anointed one." He was the One whose coming was foretold by the prophets, the One who would be anointed by God to bring about the salvation of His people.

This was the purpose of Jesus' coming into the world. This was the reason He was born, the reason He lived, the reason He died, the reason He rose from the grave. It is the reason He carries on even now a ministry of intercession before the Father in heaven (Hebrews 7:25). He was given the task of saving a lost humanity, and He accomplished it completely (John 19:30). Through Jesus the door is open for anyone to be saved from sin and to return to God. He is the Savior!

If we reject Jesus, we reject any hope of salvation, for there is no salvation apart from Him. He is the Savior, and there is no other (Acts 4:12). There is but one mediator, one link between man and God, the God-Man Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). There is but one way back to God for lost men and women (John 14:6). We must come God's way or not at all.

IV. JESUS CHRIST IS LORD.

Some think of Jesus only as the meek and humble carpenter from Nazareth, who preached love for one's enemies and offered no resistance to those who arrested and executed Him. Jesus is truly the Lamb of God, who in submission to the will of God offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin. But because of His obedience, Jesus has now been given the place of highest authority, and the name that is above every name (Philippians 2:9). He is now the Lamb upon the throne, who rules over all (Revelation 5:6).

Jesus is called not only the Lamb, but also the Lion (Revelation 5:5). When He returns in power and glory, He will complete His triumph over His already-vanquished enemies. At that time, all will bow and acknowledge Him as Lord (Philippians 2:10-11). He will be the Judge and Ruler of all the nations (Revelation 19:15), and will reign as King of kings forever (Revelation 11:15).

Though He is not yet universally recognized as King, even now Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). All who now oppose Him do so in vain. He patiently endures their rebellion, while giving them time to repent and using their resistance for His own purposes (Romans 2:2-4). All must submit to His will, whether voluntarily or not.

Jesus is Lord of all the world and all of life. He is Lord not only of the Church, but of every institution and individual. He reigns not only over the "religious" parts of our lives, but over every part: our homes and our jobs, our time and our money, our family and our nation.

There is nothing that is not under Jesus' authority, nothing that is not to be submitted to His Lordship. We must strive to do His will in all things, and work to see His will done in all areas of life, in all parts of the world. For Jesus is Lord of all!

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"
(Revelation 5:12, NIV)

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Read John 1:1-8.

1. Where was Jesus before the world was made?
2. What role did Jesus play in creation?
3. What does it mean to say, "the Word became flesh"?
4. What did Jesus come into the world to bring?
5. If no one has seen God, how can we know what He is like?