

Who Is This One Called Jesus?

King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, The Lamb of God, Immanuel, Messiah, Christ. These are all names and descriptors attributed to this one they called Jesus. Who is this figure from our ancient past that has at once brought peace and hope to millions and the sword of division among as many others? How many of us truly understand this figure from ancient Palestine who, two thousand years ago, turned the world upside down and, as evidenced by the stir caused by the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, is agitating it again today. Is Jesus a real historical figure that gave man the most sublime moral code the world has ever seen or a figure of man's imagination? Is He truly the Son of God as He claimed or, incredibly, a lunatic that changed the world? Is He the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world or merely a great moral teacher with egocentric delusions of grandeur? Is He the Savior of the world or simply a deranged man who suffered the cruelest of deaths while maintaining an insane perception of Himself? Whatever Jesus is to us today, he is not one to be ignored. For our own security we owe it to ourselves to give Jesus of Nazareth a serious look to see if He is all that He claimed to be and whether He offers us something that we desperately need.

While there is enough evidence in extra-biblical records to confirm that Jesus was an actual historical figure, and there is such an array of writings about Him and His teaching to eradicate any thought that He was a fictional character, the only real source of information about Him, His life, His message, and His mission is the Bible. In this book which was written by men, but under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, many profound claims are made by and about Jesus. Jesus claimed a sinless life. In John's gospel account Jesus challenged His opponents to bring evidence of sin (John 8:46-47) and claimed in verse 29 of the same chapter that He always did "*those things that please [God].*" As one sinless, like a lamb without blemish, He was offered as the "*Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29). We have confidence of this because "*this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God*" (Heb. 10:12). Not only was Jesus an atonement for sin, He claimed the power to forgive it. When Jesus forgave the sins of a woman who tearfully ministered to Him, those who witnessed the scene spoke, "*Who is this who even forgives sins?*" (Luke 7:49). This is the same question we ask ourselves today.

Jesus also claimed to be the only way to God. This forgiveness of sins is not some philosophical or academic exercise. It is the hope of man to one day join his Creator and live with Him in eternal bliss. John records Jesus's words, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (John 14:6). And in coming to the Father through Jesus Christ we have eternal life. Again Jesus said, "*And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day*" (John 6:40). These are words that we all have to face. Either we accept them or we reject them, but we cannot ignore them. How do we

reconcile the sublime teaching of one who claimed to be the Son of God if He were not God? C. S. Lewis wrote that Jesus cannot be a mere moral teacher. If he were simply a mortal claiming to be God he would have to be a "*lunatic...or a devil of Hell.*" We are faced with a serious choice. There is no escaping it.

Maybe this is too much to absorb in so short a time and in so small a space. After all, we are considering the most profound matters in life, issues that extend backwards and forwards into eternity. We are contemplating the meaning of life, our relationship to God, and our ultimate destiny. Maybe this is going to take some time, like a long journey to a distant land. If you wish to hasten the trip a bit, contact us by one of the means below. Otherwise, visit us here again in two weeks.