

WHO IS JESUS?
WEEK TWO: MESSIAH 101
SAM BURKE

Introduction:

Well... this is week two of our series “who is Jesus.”

{Recap of last week}

- so many opinions of who Jesus is... how do we know which one is the right one?
- Pop jesus, painted jesus, tv church jesus {Santa Jesus}, vintage jesus.
- We said that the Bible teaches that Jesus came to: take care of the problem of sin, seek & save the lost, show us who God is, show us a new way to live, and give us an eternal hope.

This week I want to take a it a step further and answer some Frequently Asked Questions that people have had over the ages as it concerns Jesus. All of the answers that I have come up with I have taken straight from the Bible. I didn't try to stretch any of it or come up with it on my own. Everything that you will hear me answer this afternoon about Jesus comes straight from this book.

My hope in these next two weeks is this: 1) that this will provide an awesome framework for you to understand who Jesus is and learn to trust him more, & 2) that this will help some of your friends who you have always wanted to share this with... but haven't for whatever reason.

If you're here tonight and you're just checking things out or you're not sure about Jesus... I want you to know that is OK. We're really excited that you've chosen to spend some time with us and my hope for you is that you'll find some encouragement from this environment as well as some good things to think about.

So let's get into the Questions... I just want to answer 4 tonight.

4 Common Questions about Jesus:

1. Is Jesus GOD?

This is a great question. Especially because of what people recently are saying about Jesus in books like “The Da Vinci Code.” The Da Vinci Code said that Jesus was a normal guy and that his followers started a rumor... a lie... that he was God. This is a timely question to answer.

Let's start in the Old Testament... roughly 400 years or so before the time of Jesus.

*“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

Isaiah 9:6

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Isaiah, who is a prophet of God, is predicting hundreds of years before Jesus is born, that there will be a special child that is born... and guess what? He will be called **MIGHTY GOD**.

“Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”

Isaiah 7:14

Now, for those of you here last week this will be a little bit of a recap... but let's do it anyway. The word Immanuel means “God is with us.” Isaiah, as he is listening to God and predicting what will happen... has twice said there will be a child born and he will be God.

Now... fast forward to the New Testament. Jesus is born. He lives. He dies. He raises from the dead. He goes back to heaven... and then his followers start writing accounts of his life called the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John.

This is what one of the best friends of Jesus, while he was on earth, wrote about him:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” {read v. 2-5 & 10-12 and then...}

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth...”

“No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.”

John 1:1, 14, 18

Now there are some pretty big and bold statements in these verses. But the MAIN THING that I wanted you to conclude from all of this is that the scriptures... the Bible... teaches that Jesus was clearly God in human flesh! He was clearly Immanuel... God with us! There is no fuzziness when you look at all the statements made about him in this way. Jesus is God. The Bible teaches it. This was not made up by his followers... it was actually written about him over 400 years before he was born.

2. Was MARY really a VIRGIN ?

This is a good question. I think the most important part of this question is “Why did she have to be a virgin?” so the big question is... was she really a virgin... and how important is that.

Now... There are a lot of answers to this question out there that, frankly, I could not justify telling you because as I searched through the scriptures I could not find them. Basically a lot of

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people have said a lot of different things on this subject over the years that really weren't in the Bible... but it helped make sense to their argument. All I'm going to do this afternoon is tell you what the Bible says. So I won't tell you what I didn't find, but I will tell you what I did find.

- 1.) Yes... Mary was a real, legitimate, no sexual intercourse, old fashioned virgin!
- 2.) The MAIN reason why this is important is because God made it important. He had Isaiah prophecy about it 400 years before Jesus was born. If Jesus was not born of a virgin... the prophecy would be wrong, thus making Isaiah a false prophet and making his predictions not valid, giving no hope to the world and making Jesus just another good man on earth. That is the ramification of this. That is why it is so important.

“all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call his name Immanuel – which means God with us.”

Matthew 1:22-23

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

Luke 1:34

The phrase in the bible that we translate into the word “VIRGIN” actually says “since I have not known a man.” In their culture... to know literally meant to KNOW. In a sexual way.

Mary tells us she is a virgin. The Bible predicts she will be a virgin. It's important because God made it important.

3. Was Jesus really PERFECT ?

Another great question. If you go down the logical argument a bit with us tonight, you'd have to conclude this. #1) the God factor... and God is perfect, so if we have concluded that Jesus is God... then we'd have to conclude that he was perfect.

But the Bible actually tells us that Jesus lived a perfect, no sin life.

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet without sin.”

Hebrews 4:15

See... here is the cool thing about Jesus: He totally knows what we're going through when we are tempted because he went through temptation himself. I want to pause here and let you know

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something... being tempted to do something is not a sin. I know some of you may have been tempted to do something wrong and feel guilty about it. Maybe you've done something wrong in the past and every time you're tempted to do it again you feel just as guilty as if you've done it. Here is some good news and a very freeing thought: being tempted is not sin. It's what you do after your tempted. Jesus was tempted... just like us... but he never sinned. He never carried out the temptation. He said over and over again that he came to fulfill God's plans. So he knows what we are going through... and he knows how to defeat the temptation... and he wants you to trust him and allow him to help you escape those temptations.

The Bible also calls Jesus the "spotless lamb of God." This is an allusion back to the Old Testament time where they would sacrifice a spotless, perfect lamb every year to cover their sins. It was a picture of who and what Jesus would be.

Only a perfect sacrifice can cover an imperfect person.

4. Why did Jesus DIE on a CROSS ?

Jesus' death on the cross was the point of Jesus' life on earth. He once said,
"the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
Matthew 20:28

Jesus died on a cross so that you and I could have a way provided back to God.

{BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION – flip chart}

Jesus death was VERY important.

Jesus once told a guy named Nicodemus this...
"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."
John 3:14-15

Jesus was alluding to a story in the Old Testament where a bunch of poisonous snakes starting biting the people of Israel as they were wandering in the desert. God told Moses to make a bronze snake, put it on a pole, and lift it up. Anyone who looked at the snake on the pole was healed. Jesus said, "Just like that... I must be lifted up on a pole... that whoever would look on me and believe... they would be eternally healed."

Paul said this in Romans,

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“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners {enemies of God}, Christ died for us.” *Romans 5:8*

Jesus died so that we... you and I... might believe that he took our place and made a way for us back to God and so that we would eternally live.

That’s why Jesus died on a cross.

Once again... We’d love to stick around and answer any more questions that you might have.

Next week we are taking the 4th of July weekend off... but we’ll be back the 13th... and we are going to answer a couple more questions about Jesus and then answer the even bigger question of “SO WHAT?” what should we do with all this information we’ve absorbed.

{PRAY}