Essential Truths
Week 4: Who Is Jesus?
THE ONE AND ONLY

John 1:1–9  — 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. 6 There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

THE WORD IS ___________
• E___________________, P___________________, D_________________ (VS. 1-2)
• THE ________________________ OF CREATION (VS. 3)
• THE ________________________ OF LIFE (VS. 4)
• THE LIGHT ____________________________________ THE DARKNESS (VS 5)
• THE FULFILLMENT OF A _____________________________ (VS. 6-9)

John 1:10–13  — 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

THE WORD CAME _______   _____________    ________   _____________

John 1:14–18  — 14 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. 15 John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ” 16 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.

THE WORD BECAME ______    ___________________

Who is God Quiz

1. A B C D
2. A B C D
3. A B C D
4. A B C D
5. A B C D
6. A B C D
7. A B C D
8. A B C D
9. A B C D
10. A B C D

Next Steps:
• Complete Session 4, Who Is Jesus (Part 1) in our Essential Truths Series
• Connect with someone in our 10-week journey through these Truths.

Check out bethanchurch.com for more details.
Who is Jesus? Perhaps few names have stirred up more discussion than this name. Many see Jesus simply as a religious leader and a teacher. Still others portray Him as a disillusioned and tortured soul in a tragic story of betrayal and defeat. And not a few people even doubt that He existed at all, that He is more myth than history.

As followers of Jesus, however, we see an entirely different picture. In fact, our belief surrounding Jesus distinguishes our faith from every other religious tradition on the planet. We believe that Jesus is the fullest expression of everything God wants to say to us. He is the fulfillment of everything God wants to do for us and with us. He is therefore the central theme of the entire biblical story. If, then, we wish to grow spiritually, we must begin to understand both the person and the work of Jesus. In this session, we examine the person of Jesus and, in the next session, we will examine the work of Jesus.

1. Jesus is God

   1 Jesus and Abraham

   Regarding His person, the story of the Bible clearly describes a Jesus who is both God and Man. As such, Jesus is entirely unique. While fully human, He is also fully divine. One day, Jesus challenged the religious leaders of His day, claiming that their ancestor, Abraham, looked forward to His coming to earth. The religious leaders were astonished:

   "You are not yet fifty years old,' they said to him, 'and you have seen Abraham!'" (John 8:57)

   Jesus responds with certainty:

   "Very truly I tell you, 'Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!'" (John 8:58)
He chooses these words carefully. The phrase “I am” is a powerful name of God Himself. It can be traced to the days of Moses, when God reveals Himself by this name. When Moses asks God what he should tell the people about who is sending him, God answers:

“I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” (Exodus 3:14)

When Jesus responds to the religious leaders, He uses this same name to refer to Himself. He is claiming to be the great I AM! The religious leaders got His point, and they immediately picked up stones to execute Him for His blasphemy. Later, Jesus would make a similar claim, saying clearly, “I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30) And the religious leaders reacted in the same way, threatening to stone Him. They gave their reason:

“We are not stoning you for any good work,’ they replied, ‘but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.’” (John 10:33)

Jesus's claim to be God is part of a longer story of God's promises. Centuries earlier, the prophet, Isaiah, received a revelation about a coming Savior:

“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)

Here we see that this promised child would have the names and nature of God Himself. So, when God does send His Son, Jesus, the angels confirm that He is this promised Child:

“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.’” (Luke 2:11-14)

As the New Testament writers reflect on how Jesus fulfills these divine promises, they affirm in bold terms the fact that Jesus is God with us. The apostle, Matthew, explains:

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’ (which means ‘God with us’).” (Matthew 1:22-23; see Isaiah 7:14)
Jesus, the Creator

The apostle John affirms that Jesus was present right from the beginning of creation:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” (John 1:1-3)

The apostle Paul likewise speaks in lofty, praise language about this same Jesus:

“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:15-7)

And, the writer to the Hebrews speaks in similar terms, saying:

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.” (Hebrews 1:3)

So then, these are just a few of the passages that declare plainly and clearly that Jesus is divine as well as human.

2. Jesus Is Man

1. Plain Statements

While stressing the divinity of Jesus, however, the Bible is equally clear about His humanity. The writer to the Hebrews says explicitly that He is made “fully human in every way” (Hebrews 2:17). The Apostle John puts it this way: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” (John 1:14) Apparently, this truth needed to be restated firmly after Jesus ascended to be with the Father. It seems that some false teachers began to float the idea that Jesus only appeared to be human, that He was not fully human. In response to these false teachings, John spoke some harsh words:

“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. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.” (1 John 4:2-3; compare 2 John 7)

The apostle was not leaving any room for doubt. Jesus was fully human.

2. Human Attributes

We often see this human side of Jesus in the gospels. He “weeps”, He is “troubled”, and He “was amazed”. He was “tired”, “hungry” and “thirsty”. (Matthew 4:2; 8:10; Luke 4:2; 19:41; John 4:6; 11:33,35; 12:27; 13:21; 19:28) He had to grow and learn, like all human children, as Luke makes clear:

“And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.” (Luke 2:40; compare Luke 2:52)

Human and Divine

Even though Jesus walked among us in human flesh, however, He never ceases to be God. Instead, during His time on earth, Jesus voluntarily sets aside some of His prerogatives as God. The apostle Paul describes His loving sacrifice this way:

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8)

As God, Jesus hides His divinity for a time, so that we may see fully His true humanity.

Perfectly Human

There is however, one major distinction between the humanity of Jesus and our humanity. Jesus alone lived a perfect, holy and righteous life. The writer to the Hebrews says:

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)

The apostle Peter cites the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah:

“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth.” (1 Peter 2:22; compare Isaiah 53:6)

And then he adds:

“When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats.” (1 Peter 2:23)

The Apostle John echoes this thought when he says:

“But you know that He appeared so that He might take away our sins. And in Him is no sin.” (1 John 3:5)

A Human Death for Us

It was important for Jesus to live this righteous, sinless life, because His death can now take the place of our death. As the Apostle Paul says:

“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

In other words, by His perfect life, Jesus restores us to a full and true humanity, humanity as God originally intended it to be. This is why Paul refers to Jesus as a “second Adam”. He says:

“For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22)

A New Human Destiny

In fact, this righteous character of Jesus is now our new destiny. As Paul also says:

“For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” (Romans 8:29)

Imagine that! We are destined to be conformed to the image of this same Jesus who lived a righteous life. We are to become children that act like He does. What a promise!
Human Resurrection

• The Resurrection of Jesus

As confirmation of all these promises, God physically raises Jesus from the dead. The physical resurrection of Jesus is a sure sign of what the Creator intends for us as human beings. From the very beginning of the church, this belief in the historical resurrection of Jesus is essential. Paul reports to the church at Corinth:

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.” (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

Paul lists all these witnesses to prove that what he says is true. Many of these witnesses were still alive as Paul writes his letter, and they could testify as to what they had seen.

• Our Resurrection

This historical fact of Jesus’ physical resurrection is crucial for our hope as believers. As the Apostle Paul explains:

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.” (1 Corinthians 15:17-19)

For those who trust in Him, however, Jesus’ resurrection offers a sure and certain hope. Paul continues:

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.” (1 Corinthians 15:20-21)

The resurrection of Jesus guarantees that we humans can also live beyond death. We also have the hope of a physical resurrection. We may not know exactly what that resurrection body may look like, but we do know that we will inherit it in Christ.

• A Human Hope

Which is why Paul can speak so convincingly about his hope. He says:

“I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’” (1 Corinthians 15:50-55)

Conclusion

This, then, is what the Bible generally teaches about the person of Jesus. If someone asks us, “Who is Jesus?”, we can confidently say that He is God and He is Man. In our next session, we will discuss Part 2 of our answer, but, until then, may God reward you and bless you as you continue your spiritual journey.
Discussion Questions

Who is Jesus? Jesus is God and Man, Lord and Savior.

After completing Session 4, Who Is Jesus, Part 1, you can use the following questions to encourage discussion within your group.

Opening

Describe the various views of Jesus that we find in our culture today.

Going Deeper

1. Jesus Is God

✓ What is your initial reaction to the idea that Jesus is God?
✓ Referring back to Moses’ interaction with God in the book of Exodus, Jesus describes himself as, “I am” (cf. Exodus 3:14; John 8:58). How does this powerful name of God reflect Jesus’ divinity?
✓ From what we just learned, how does the Biblical description of Jesus differ from today’s cultural view of Jesus?
✓ If Jesus is God, does this truth affect your view of Jesus? How could it affect the ways you interact with Him?

2. Jesus Is Man

✓ The Bible teaches that, as a man, Jesus lived a perfect, holy, and righteous life. What is your reaction to this truth?
✓ Why is it important for us to understand Jesus’ humanity?
✓ 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” What does this mean in regards to our relationship with Jesus? Why is it essential that we understand that through Jesus we can “become the righteousness of God”?
✓ Read 1 Corinthians 15:17-22. How does Jesus’ resurrection guarantee that we humans can also live beyond death?
✓ How is your understanding affected by the truth that Jesus is both fully God and fully man?

Next Steps

Spend time this week in prayer, reflecting on the person of Jesus. Thank God for the fact that He reveals Himself to us in Jesus, that He came for us in Jesus, that He saves and restores us in Jesus.