

Palisades Community Bible Church

Online Sunday School

Who Is Jesus Christ?

January 23, 2021

"Who is Jesus Christ?" It's been said that you can divide the entire population of the earth in two with this one question. More simply, do you think you can look around your own holiday dinner table and create two groups with this question? How about the people you work with? Your friends?

If you consider Jesus as just a historical figure, and nothing more, can you identify those who think as you, and those who believe He is God's Son? If you, yourself, believe Jesus is God's Son, can you spot those who do NOT believe it?

This question is deeply personal, yet we tend to wear our own answer openly. Doesn't it often show in how someone acts, speaks and treats others?

Many people, who do not know who Jesus truly is, resist asking this question. They fear some 'religious rant' may follow, or worse. Likewise, there are MANY who have grown up in a religious environment who THINK they know, but may actually have an unclear understanding of Jesus.

Some folks fear knowing who Jesus is because they worry that it may carry with it some degree of obligation. Perhaps, it's a bit like taxes; if you don't KNOW you owe taxes, it's easier to not pay so long you just avoid the topic altogether. That doesn't really work, does it?

I hope this study will be beneficial to;

- a) the does not know or does not believe,
- b) the believer who is unclear and/or
- c) the believer who is very clear and who struggles to answer this question for others.

Just a note; if we are to answer this question, it's going to take more than a sentence, or two. We are not discussing Santa Clause....OK?

Who is Jesus Christ? Let's look at the name

Unlike the question of whether God exists, almost nobody questions whether Jesus existed. There may be debate on his divine qualities, but most folks do believe he is a historical figure. Most of the world's religions, even atheists, acknowledge Jesus as having lived, and being a moral teacher.

Though Jesus died at age 33, he is one of the most well documented figures in history. There were thousands of people who witnessed his life, his work, his miracles, his teachings, and he appears in numerous ancient historic documents, especially the Bible. From a foundation of historical proof, there is no question.

"Jesus" is an English translation of the Hebrew name; Yeshua. All names, even yours, mean something (look yours up). Yeshua means: "to deliver; rescue."

"Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." John 14:13

"Christ" is translated from "Christos", which means: "chosen one, anointed one." So, "Jesus Christ" literally means; **chosen by God to deliver and rescue.** The short answer to our question of who he is lies in his name.

"My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous." 1 John 2:1

If we look at the "**Christ**" part of his name. we understand that he was chosen...selected...empowered....mandated to be a "**Yeshuah**;" a deliverer....a rescuer....a redeemer....a ransom....a savior. So, who was he selected to save? This answer starts in the Garden of Eden, with the first humans.

Where do I fit into this?

Is it hard to believe that the first man and woman were born perfect, lived in a perfect environment and yet, rebelled against their Father? It may be easier to understand if you look at yourself when you were a kid, or look at other kids: do they not have almost every need taken care of by their parents...and yet, **rebel**

against them? How often does a young child rebel, disrespect, offend their parents....who are only trying to protect, love and care for the child?

Is the parent being mean or abusive if they don't allow their child to stick a paperclip into a wall socket, or dart across the street, or drink alcohol? Of course not! So, is it mean of God to have put some 'guard rails' around the human race, like the Ten commandments? These moral guard rails are there to protect, help and direct people toward successful living. But, we break them...don't we?

Traffic laws are there to protect us, but we speed, roll through stop signs, and text while we drive, don't we? It's evidence of our sin inheritance!

Just like our first set of parents, we sin against God

Because Adam and Eve sinned, the trait of sin became part of the human race. It's genetic. We cannot help the fact that each of us was born a sinner. The evidence is that none of us has ever been able to keep the Ten Commandments. Each of us has lied, or stolen, etc. "Sin" is the separation between humans and God.

God created humans to be with Him for eternity. Because of our sin, we cannot be with God. Our sin condition has made us imperfect. God is perfect and no sin can be in his presence.

Isaiah 59:2 "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear."

I have a friend who knows computers very well. He told me that, if you disassemble a computer's hard drive, contaminants in the air instantly destroy it. Just the contaminants in the air ruin the drive. God is like that. He is so pure and so holy that no sin can be in His presence – otherwise, He would not be God.

God, as a father and creator, hates that sin separates us from Him. He wants us to be close to Him, because that's the only way we can live our happiest, most successful lives – here, on earth – and afterward, in heaven. Sin spoils the relationship. Let's see what God's word, the Bible says:

Romans 3: 23 "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious (perfect) standard."

But, that's not all. God is deeply saddened because of the next issue:

Romans 6: 23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God wants us to have eternal life with Him. Sin messes that up. If we remain in our sin condition, we will NOT have eternal life with Him (heaven). Sin carries with it consequences; bad ones. God does not want us living under the burdens of sin!

What can be done?

The trouble with a solution for sin is that it must come from God, the creator, himself. You and I cannot do anything so bad that we can send ourselves to hell. We were born already going to hell. Likewise, we cannot do anything so good that we can earn our way to heaven. We cannot change our “DNA.” Only our creator can do that!

The fact that your sin nature shows itself in immoral behavior is not what has secured for you an eternity in Hell. That was caused by our first parents. You may try to resist that sin nature with “good works,” but it is insufficient to take your sin condition away. In the same way, you cannot change your blood type, eye color, etc. Those are inherited. You inherited a sin nature and it plays out in your everyday life – and you suffer for it!

One snowy night, a flock of small birds crashed into the big window of a farmer's house. The birds were too weak to fly, and they were confused by the storm as they flopped in the snow. So, the man opened his barn, turned on the light and tried to urge the birds to go inside. They just scattered in fear. He tried making a trail of bread crumbs, he tried gently shooing them, and nothing worked. He thought to himself; “If only I could become one of them. I could SHOW them the way. Then, I could save them.”

Like the farmer, God's heart was so broken over the sinfulness of humans that He developed a way to save us from it. He knows that we cannot be in his presence in our sinful state, so He sent His Son, Jesus to provide a way of salvation. God chose...selected...empowered his Son to be a deliverer...a rescuer...a redeemer. Jesus Christ is God in human form who walked with us, taught us, and died on the

cross for our sins. Yes, the payment for sin's penalty (death) had to be paid for with a life.

Hebrews 5:9 "In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him."

Imagine that you were driving and texting; you hit someone in the road....and they died. Then, the judge found you guilty, and you received a life sentence. Could you pay it in any other way than with your own life? Well, suppose the judge's son came forward and said HE would serve your sentence for you? His life would satisfy the law's demand for a penalty, and you would be freed from that penalty. What would you think of that judge's son?

This is what Jesus has done for each of us. The sin penalty has been paid by God's son. But, as with the example of your court case, it would only work if you accepted that generous gift! If you refused the judge's son's offer, you'd rot in jail. The same is true with Jesus Christ. If you refuse His gift of forgiveness, salvation, redemption, you'll remain in your sin, and God cannot have you in His presence (heaven).

John 3: 16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."

So, now you know who Jesus Christ is. Now you know what He offers you. Jesus said **"I am the resurrection and the life...anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying...Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never die."**
John 10.

So, is that good news for you, or bad news? It's good news if you want to accept Jesus' offer of the forgiveness of your sin condition, and accept His offer of eternal life. It's bad news if you know you have a sin nature and want to keep it. Your heavenly father most definitely wants you to walk with Him all your days!

So, how do you do it? Just say this simple prayer, and mean it:

“Jesus, I believe you are the son of God who came to take away my sin. I want to turn that over to you so that you can be in charge of my life. I turn from my sin nature and accept what you did for me.”

I hope you were able to do this. If not, please hold onto this and read it another time. Talk with others who believe in Jesus Christ and get their perspectives.

May God bless your life!