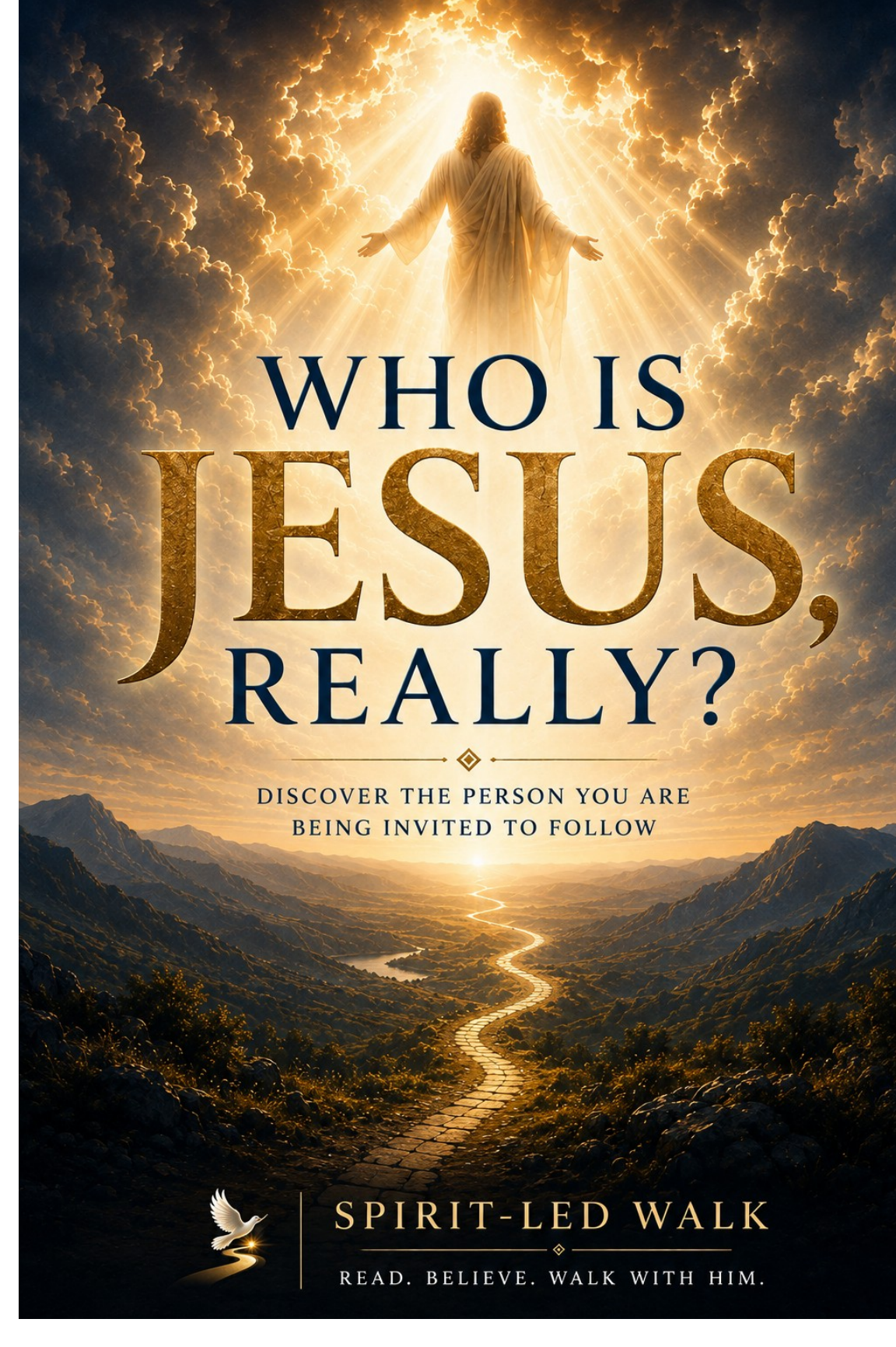




WHO IS JESUS, REALLY?

— ◆ —
DISCOVER THE PERSON YOU ARE
BEING INVITED TO FOLLOW



— ◆ —
SPIRIT-LED WALK

— ◆ —
READ. BELIEVE. WALK WITH HIM.

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A Spirit-Led Walk resource for the spiritually curious, new believers,
and growing followers of Jesus.

Sean Jones

A Spirit-Led Walk Resource

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Who Is Jesus, Really?

There may be no more important question you will ever answer:

Who is Jesus?

Maybe you are exploring Christianity and aren't sure what you believe yet.

Maybe you believe in God, but you're still trying to understand where Jesus fits.

Maybe you've called yourself a Christian for years, but if someone asked you to explain who Jesus really is, you aren't sure what you would say.

A great teacher? A prophet? The founder of Christianity? The Son of God? A Savior?

Those answers aren't all the same. And Jesus didn't leave His identity open for us to define however we want.

He made extraordinary claims about Himself. The Bible makes even bigger ones.

If those claims are true, Jesus isn't simply someone worth learning about. He is someone who changes everything.

So rather than beginning with what you've heard about Jesus, let's look at what Scripture actually reveals about Him.

More Than the Man in the Manger

Most people know at least part of the Christmas story. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Mary was His mother. He was laid in a manger.

Shepherds came. Later, wise men came to honor Him.

But if our understanding of Jesus begins with His birth, we've already started too late.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being.”

John 1:1-3 • NASB 2020

Before Bethlehem, Jesus already existed. Before Mary held Him, He existed. Before Abraham, Moses, David, or any other person in human history, He existed.

In fact, Scripture takes us further still. Before the earth existed, He existed. Before there was an ocean, a mountain, a star, an animal, or a human being, He existed.

John identifies Jesus as the Word and tells us that the Word was with God and was God. Then John tells us that this eternal Word became flesh and lived among us.

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14 • NASB 2020

Jesus did not begin in Bethlehem.

Bethlehem is where the eternal Son of God entered human history as one of us. That changes the way we see Him.

Jesus Is God

This can be difficult to wrap our minds around.

Christianity teaches that there is one God, eternally existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

“I and the Father are one.”

John 10:30 • NASB 2020

That is an enormous claim. Jesus wasn't merely saying, “God and I agree.” His audience understood the significance of what He was saying. The verses that follow tell us they picked up stones to stone Him, accusing Him of blasphemy because, in their words, He was making Himself out to be God.

And this wasn't an isolated statement. One of the clearest moments comes during a confrontation recorded in John 8.

“Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”

John 8:58 • NASB 2020

Notice what He did not say. He didn't simply say, “Before Abraham was born, I existed.” He said:

I AM.

To understand why that mattered, we have to go much further back in the Bible.

The I AM

Hundreds of years before Jesus walked the earth, God appeared to Moses from a burning bush.

God was sending Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Moses asked what he should say if the people asked for the name of the God who had sent him.

God answered in Exodus 3:14: “I AM WHO I AM.” God then told Moses to say that “I AM” had sent him.

So when Jesus stood before a Jewish audience centuries later and said, “Before Abraham was born, I am,” He was using language deeply connected to God’s revelation of Himself.

And again, the people listening understood the significance. Immediately afterward, they picked up stones to throw at Him.

The Jesus of Scripture cannot be reduced to simply a good moral teacher.

His claims are too large for that.

The Creator Walked Among Us

Now we come to something that can completely expand our perception of Jesus.

When you picture creation, what do you imagine? Maybe you picture the opening chapter of Genesis: light, sky, oceans, dry land, plants, the sun, moon, and stars, sea creatures, birds, animals, human beings.

Again and again, God speaks and creation responds. But the New Testament reveals something remarkable about Jesus’ involvement in all of this.

READ → Colossians 1:15-17

It tells us that Jesus is the image of the invisible God and that all things were created through Him and for Him. Everything visible. Everything invisible. Everything in heaven. Everything on earth.

And Scripture goes even further. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Think about what that means.

The Jesus who walked dusty roads in Israel is the One through whom the universe was created.

The One who touched lepers created human skin. The One who opened blind eyes designed sight. The One who calmed a storm created the oceans. The One who multiplied bread created the grain. The One who raised the dead is the source of life itself. The One eventually nailed to a wooden cross created the tree from which that wood came.

Jesus isn't simply part of creation. He is Lord over it.

Sometimes our view of Jesus becomes far too small. We put Him into a framework we can comfortably understand: teacher, religious leader, historical figure, miracle worker.

But Scripture keeps breaking the framework. Jesus is bigger than the categories we try to put Him in.

What If I Can't Fully Understand That?

You probably can't. Neither can I. And that shouldn't surprise us.

If God could fit entirely inside the limits of the human mind, He wouldn't be much of a God.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:8-9 • NASB 2020

There will be things about God that stretch our understanding. The Trinity stretches our understanding. Eternity stretches our understanding. A God who has always existed stretches our understanding. Creation itself stretches our understanding.

But there is an important difference between not understanding everything about God and having no reason to believe Him.

Christian faith is not an invitation to stop thinking. It is an invitation to recognize that our thinking has limits.

There are things about the universe that we still struggle to comprehend. New discoveries continually remind us how much remains beyond our present understanding.

Why would we expect the Creator of that universe to be easier to comprehend than the universe He created?

God does not become smaller because our understanding is small.

And neither does Jesus.

Why Did He Come?

If Jesus is truly God, the Creator and sustainer of all things, then another question becomes unavoidable:

Why would He come here?

Why step into His creation? Why become human? Why experience hunger, exhaustion, rejection, betrayal, pain, and death?

Jesus explained His mission plainly. He came to seek and save the lost.

The Bible teaches that humanity's deepest problem isn't merely that we need better habits, more education, more money, or a better philosophy for life. Our deepest problem is separation from God because of sin.

Every one of us has gone our own way. We've all done things that fall short of God's goodness. And we cannot repair that separation by simply becoming more religious or trying harder to be good.

So God came to us.

Jesus lived the life we could not live: without sin. Then He willingly went to the cross. He took upon Himself the consequence of our sin. He died. And on the third day, He rose from the dead.

Jesus didn't come merely to teach us how to live. He came to save us.

If we only needed information, God could have sent another teacher. If we only needed rules, He could have given us more commandments. If we only needed inspiration, He could have sent another prophet.

But we needed rescue. So He sent His Son.

Jesus Is Savior

The name Jesus itself points toward His mission. Before His birth, an angel told Joseph that Mary's child was to be named Jesus because He would save His people from their sins.

This is at the heart of Christianity. God didn't wait for humanity to climb its way back to Him. He came down to us.

Jesus took our sin upon Himself at the cross and made reconciliation with God possible. Then He rose from the dead.

The resurrection isn't a small detail added to the end of the story. It is central to it. If Jesus remained in the grave, Christianity collapses.

But the earliest Christian message was built around this declaration: Jesus Christ was crucified, and He rose from the dead.

Death did not defeat Him. The grave did not hold Him. The Creator entered death and came out the other side.

"I am the resurrection and the life; the one who believes in Me will live, even if he dies."

John 11:25 • NASB 2020

Jesus didn't merely claim that He could give resurrection and life. He said:

I am the resurrection and the life.

Life is found in Him.

The Way, the Truth, and the Life

Our culture is comfortable with the idea that Jesus was a good person. It is much less comfortable with what Jesus actually said.

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”

John 14:6 • NASB 2020

That is an exclusive claim. Jesus didn't say, “I am a way.” He said, “I am the way.” He didn't say, “I can show you some truth.” He said, “I am the truth.” And He didn't simply promise a better life philosophy. He said, “I am the life.”

This is one of the places where we have to allow Jesus to speak for Himself, even when His words challenge what we might prefer to believe.

There are many religious and spiritual ideas in the world. They don't all say the same thing, and they cannot all be true in the same sense when their central claims contradict one another.

Reconciliation with the Father comes through Him.

You don't have to believe that simply because someone tells you to. Explore it. Read the Gospels. Examine His words. Ask questions.

But don't reshape Jesus into someone who makes claims He never made. If we want to know who Jesus really is, we have to let Jesus answer the question.

Who Did Jesus Say He Was?

As you read the Gospels, something remarkable happens. Jesus describes Himself again and again:

“I am the bread of life.” - John 6:35

He is the One who satisfies the deepest hunger of the human soul.

“I am the Light of the world.” - John 8:12

He is the One who leads us out of darkness.

“I am the good shepherd.” - John 10:11

He is the One who knows, leads, protects, and lays down His life for His sheep.

“I am the resurrection and the life.” - John 11:25

He is the One who has authority even over death.

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” - John 14:6

He is the One through whom we come to the Father.

“I am the true vine.” - John 15:1

He is the source from whom our spiritual life flows.

This Question Eventually Becomes Personal

It's possible to read everything so far as interesting information. You can learn what Christians believe about Jesus. You can learn the verses. You can understand the theology.

But eventually the question moves from information to decision.

Jesus once asked His disciples what other people were saying about Him. They gave several answers. Then Jesus made the question personal:

“But who do you yourselves say that I am?”

Matthew 16:15 • NASB 2020

That question still stands. Not: What did your parents believe? What does your church believe? What does your friend believe? What did someone on the internet tell you?

Who do you believe Jesus is?

Because your answer shapes everything.

If Jesus were merely a teacher, you could take some of His advice and ignore the rest. If He were merely a historical figure, you could study Him and move on. If He were merely one spiritual option among many, you could choose whichever path felt best to you.

But if Jesus is who He says He is... If He is God. If He is Creator. If He is the eternal I AM. If He died for you. If He rose from the dead. If He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Then Jesus isn't merely asking to become part of your life. He has a rightful claim to all of it.

Belief Is More Than Agreement

You can believe certain facts about Jesus without actually trusting Him. Biblical belief goes deeper. It means placing your trust in the Person those truths reveal.

This is where faith becomes personal.

Maybe you've been carrying a quiet "what if?" What if this isn't true? What if I surrender and God doesn't come through? What if following Jesus costs me something? What if I don't understand everything?

Questions aren't the enemy of faith. Honest questions can lead us toward truth. But eventually there comes a point when endless "what ifs" can become a way of standing at a distance.

There is a difference between sincerely searching for truth and refusing to trust until every possible uncertainty has disappeared.

You may never understand everything about God. None of us does. But you can know enough about Jesus to take the next step toward Him.

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

Romans 10:17 • NASB 2020

That's one reason Scripture matters so much. Faith isn't built by pretending doubts don't exist. Faith grows as we hear, understand, and respond to the truth about Jesus.

Don't Just Take My Word for It

If you're still exploring Christianity, here's a simple challenge:

Read one of the Gospels for yourself. Start with John.

Don't read it merely to finish chapters. Read it looking for Jesus.

Ask as you go: What does Jesus say about Himself? What does He do? How does He treat people? What claims does He make? What do the people closest to Him eventually believe about Him?

And perhaps most importantly: If this is true, what does it mean for me?

God, if You are real, help me see Jesus for who He really is. Show me the truth, and give me the courage to respond to it.

Then read. Pay attention. Keep asking.

If You Already Believe

Maybe none of this is new information for you. You've already confessed Jesus as Lord. You've already believed in His death and resurrection.

Then perhaps the question isn't simply: Do I believe in Jesus? Maybe the better question is:

How big is the Jesus I actually believe in?

It's possible to confess a limitless Savior while living as though He were very small.

We can trust Him for eternity but struggle to trust Him with tomorrow. We can call Him Creator while quietly assuming our circumstances are beyond His reach. We can call Him Lord while keeping entire areas of our lives under our own control. We can call Him the Way while continuing to choose our own way.

Sometimes we need our perception of Jesus expanded again.

Go back to Scripture. Look again.

The One you are trusting is not weak. He is not confused. He is not surprised. He is not limited by the things that limit you.

He is Jesus. Creator. Savior. Lord. The I AM. The Way. The Truth. The Life.

So, Who Is Jesus, Really?

He is the eternal Son of God. He is one with the Father. He is the Word who became flesh. He is the Creator and sustainer of all things. He is the promised Messiah. He is the Good Shepherd. He is the Bread of Life. He is the Light of the World. He is the Resurrection and the Life. He is the Savior who willingly gave His life for us. He is the risen Lord.

He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the great I AM.

And He is inviting you to know Him.

Not merely know about Him. Know Him.

What Will You Do With Jesus?

You don't have to understand everything before you take a step toward Him.

Maybe your next step is simply to read the Gospel of John. Maybe it's admitting that you've kept Jesus at a safe distance. Maybe it's surrendering an area of your life you've been determined to control. Maybe you've realized that you've known about Christianity without ever actually putting your trust in Christ.

Wherever you are, you can talk to Him honestly. You don't need religious language. You don't need a perfect prayer.

You can begin with something as simple as:

Jesus, I want to know who You really are.

I believe You are more than I have understood.

Help me see You clearly.

Help me believe what is true.

Forgive me for the ways I have gone my own way.

I put my trust in You.

Teach me to know You, follow You, and surrender my life to You.

Amen.

And then keep going. Open Scripture. Talk to Him. Listen. Obey what He shows you.

**Knowing who Jesus is isn't the end of the journey. It's
where the Spirit-Led Walk begins.**