



WHO IS JESUS?

Who is Jesus is the crucial question the gospel writers ask. What are we to make of this multi-faceted person, his teaching, his miracles, his life and death?

Matthew 22:42. Jesus asked them 'What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he'?

This series explores that question. Who do you think Jesus is and what are his claims on your life?

MARCH 2023

WHO IS JESUS?

Small Group Study Guide | 5th March

Topic: 'Prepare the way of the Lord'

Bible passages: Matthew 3

INTRODUCTION

John the Baptist preaches a message of the nearness of the Kingdom of Heaven. Implicit in the message is that God's messiah, God's anointed King is coming to reign. John carries the weight of the expectation of the people of God from the Old Testament era of a messianic King. Is Jesus that person? Does Jesus fulfil those prophetic expectations? Does He challenge received expectations about the nature of His Kingdom?

Significantly in all four gospels John introduces Jesus as 'the one who will baptise you with the Holy Spirit' (and fire). V 11. The coming King is inaugurating a new dynamic of Kingdom life, a Holy Spirit empowered life. It is fitting that he is called the Christ-anointed one, and the Spirit rests on him v 16 as a sign of this.

QUESTIONS

1. For John 'repentance' is the appropriate response to the news of the coming King. What did repentance look like for the Jewish people in preparing for the Messiah? What does the word repentance mean?
2. In what ways does OT prophecy prepare us for Jesus incarnation? What particular bible passages does the New Testament reference?
3. What is the link between repentance, baptism and the gift of the Spirit? (Acts 2:38)
4. How much is Jesus your Lord? What preparation or repentance was/is needed for that Lordship to happen?

MARCH 2023

WHO IS JESUS?

Small Group Study Guide | 12th March

Topic: Son of God?

Bible passages: Matthew 3:17 – 4:11

INTRODUCTION

If you are the son of God..says Satan. C.S. Lewis famously (Mere Christianity) that Jesus doesn't leave us the option that he is just a good moral teacher. He is either 'mad, bad or God'.

QUESTIONS

1. How do you understand the 'both and' of Jesus being fully God and fully human (Son of God and Son of Man)?
 2. What does it mean to be 'Son of God? Is that a pre-existent and unique divine state as Christians affirm? Or is Jesus 'adopted' as a son because of his righteous life?
 3. How does this passage reveal the heart of Father to Son and heart of Son to Father?.How much of the relationship between Jesus and Father is unique, and how much are we entitled to come into as children of God?
 4. Do we believe God takes pleasure in us as his children, and if so why?
 5. Do we worship Jesus in the same way as we worship God the Father?
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MARCH 2023

WHO IS JESUS?

Small Group Study Guide | 19th March

Topic: 'A new Moses'?

Bible passages: Matthew 5-7

INTRODUCTION

Is Jesus just a great moral teacher? Comparisons are made between the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. The five sections of teaching in Matthew that end e.g. 7:28 'When Jesus had finished saying these things' are compared by Bible Scholars to the 5 books of the law. Moses himself prophesied that God would raise up a prophet like himself Deuteronomy 18:15 (c.f. Acts 3:22). So is that who Jesus is? A new Moses?

QUESTIONS

1. What is different about Jesus, the one who says 'Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect' (5:48) to other moral teachers or figures like Buddha or Mohammed?
 2. What does the teaching of Jesus reveal about who he is? Where does he get His authority from (7:29)?
 3. How is the nature of Jesus and the Kingdom of God revealed in his teaching? What makes it unique and inspiring?
 4. Does the teaching of Jesus command our obedience in a deeper way than other moral teaching? Is it possible to live out these values of this 'upside down kingdom'?
 5. What is your experience (and success!) in trying to put the teaching of Jesus into practice? How can Church help people do this?
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MARCH 2023

WHO IS JESUS?

Small Group Study Guide | 25th March

Topic: Miracle Worker

Bible passages: Matthew 8-9

INTRODUCTION

These chapters introduce an extraordinary flow of miracles in the ministry of Jesus. In them we see Jesus responding to faith, speaking to nature, to demons, to sickness, opening the eyes of the blind and raising the dead.

His healing ministry provokes questions from those who witness it. Who is this man? Do we want him in our area? Is he blaspheming when he pronounces forgiveness?

QUESTIONS

1. What do miracles tell us about Jesus? Why do some scholars go to great lengths to debunk the supernatural in the records of Jesus' life? Does Jesus do miracles because he is God's son, or a Spirit filled man? Are some miracles ones that authenticate his Divinity and some that are models for us to follow? How could we tell the difference if so?
 2. Why did people ask Jesus to leave their region?
 3. What are the keys to seeing the release of the miraculous in these stories? Can we be 'naturally supernatural' today?
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APRIL 2023

WHO IS JESUS?

Small Group Study Guide | 2nd April

Topic: Prophet and provocateur

Bible passages: Matthew 21-25

INTRODUCTION

The last week of Jesus life is extraordinary. Jesus throws down the gauntlet to all the powers, secular, religious and supernatural, with his challenging words and prophetic actions.

QUESTIONS

1. How does Jesus fulfil the complete ministries of 'prophet, priest and king', how is he the 'true Israel' as his story completes the Old Testament revelation and fulfils God's rescue plan.
 2. Prophecy, opportunity to repent, judgement against hardness of heart are all characteristics of Old Testament prophetic ministry to wayward Israel. How much of this does Jesus replicate, and in what ways is he different from Old Testament prophets?
 3. How much is Jesus the victim of a conspiracy of evil, and how much does he provoke a reaction in His challenging ways?
 4. How are we called to be a prophetic people as we follow the example of our Lord?
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