

THE GOSPEL

GOD'S GREAT RESCUE



WEEK 3: JESUS, THE GOD-MAN

Text: John 1:1-4, 10-18 & Colossians 1:15-20

This week's message has one agenda, and that is to remove in us the passive sort of acceptance that many of us have of Jesus. The gospel calls us to either fully embrace Christ with our lives or to reject him outright. There is no middle ground.

Start this week's study by asking yourself the question:

Q: Is Jesus an addition to my life or is he at the centre of it?

No one can deny the existence of Jesus or his death, or the claims of his resurrection in the first century. But in recent times, people have argued that Jesus never actually claimed to be divine, and that his claims were only added to the religion at a later date, in order to develop some sort of institutional control over people. However, these claims, though widely held, are historically inaccurate.

So this week we are looking at some of the claims that Jesus made about himself, and we turn first to the gospel of John.

1. THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS BELIEVED THAT JESUS WAS GOD

Today's church has watered down its concept of who Jesus is in many ways. This passive acceptance of him, as a saviour from our brokenness and a "band-aid"/therapist, has become more and more common in our day. But this was not at all how the early church viewed him. Under fierce persecution for their very faith, they believed wholeheartedly that Jesus was God, and they worshipped him for it.

- ❖ Q: In what ways has our version of Christianity watered down Jesus' divinity, in the way we relate to/ think about him?
- ❖ Q: If we truly believed that Jesus was God (at a heart-level), how do you think it would change the way we live our lives?

2. JESUS BELIEVED THAT HE WAS GOD

- Jesus believed he came from heaven to earth (John 6:36).
- Jesus believed he was more than just a good man (Mark 10:17-18). He continually equated himself to being the same as God, which is why the religious leaders wanted to kill him (John 5:18).
- Jesus claimed he could work miracles, because he was God (John 10:38-39).
- Jesus claimed he could forgive sin (Luke 7:48).
- Jesus believed people should pray to him (John 14:14).
- Jesus believed that he would judge the entire world (John 5:24-27).
- Jesus believed he was the only source of salvation (John 14:6).
- Jesus believed that all the scriptures were about him (John 5:39).
- Jesus believed he had authority over everything in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18).

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When Jesus taught, people reacted in all sorts of ways. He was regularly rejected, he was falsely accused, misunderstood, betrayed and hated. Even some of his close followers could not cope with what he taught and some fled when the going got tough. But he continued to teach and lead. After his death and resurrection, many of his followers realised who he was as God, and surrendered their lives to him, even to the point of death. This is what the reality of Christ does in the heart.

C.S Lewis suggested that the teachings about Jesus's divinity (above) must cause one of 3 reactions in us: either *hatred*, *terror* or *adoration*. We cannot just embrace Christ as a moral teacher or guru. He is either God or he is not. We cannot merely sit on the fence.

- ❖ *Personal Reflection Q: Consider this carefully: where does your faith in Christ lie at this very moment in your life? Are you fully devoted, or are you living your life in passivity, indifference or even partial allegiance?*
- ❖ Q: Having been confronted by the truths in scripture about Christ's divinity, what is the only fitting response?
- ❖ Q: If you realise that your heart is just not responsive to the truth in scripture, even though you can acknowledge it to be true intellectually, what should you do? What does a step of faith or obedience look like?

3. ETERNAL LIFE IS ON OFFER FOR ANYONE WHO BELIEVES THAT JESUS IS GOD

- Read Romans 10:9-11

We are promised life with God, if we believe that Jesus is in fact God. Do we really believe that he is?

- ❖ Q: What does the Bible mean when it speaks about eternal life?
- ❖ Q: What is the alternative for those who choose not to believe that Jesus is God?
- ❖ Q: Are you living your life in such a way that you exude gratitude for your gift of eternal life with God? Explain your answer.