

“Is Jesus Really God?”

“Jesus asked them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’” Mark 8:29

For 2,000 years Christians have proclaimed that Jesus is God. They believe that God exists as three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus, sometimes spoken of as the Second Person of this “Trinity”, came from heaven, lived on earth for about 33 years, was crucified for our sins, rose from the dead, now reigns with his Father in heaven and one day will return to judge the world. The New Testament declares it, the early creeds affirm it and a large portion of the world claims to believe it. Thousands more are coming to believe it daily, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Is it reasonable to believe that Jesus is God? Do I need to do anything about it?

Before you begin this week’s study, ask *“Who do you believe Jesus is? Why do you hold this belief?”*

John 11:38-57

³⁸ Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” ⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, ⁴⁶ but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

⁴⁹ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. ⁵⁰ Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” ⁵¹ He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. ⁵³ So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

⁵⁴ Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

⁵⁵ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?” ⁵⁷ Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

Study & Discussion

1. This passage is the latter part the account of Lazarus and his sisters, Mary & Martha—all friends of Jesus. At this point in the narrative, Lazarus has died and Mary and Martha are in grief. Read John 11:38-40.
 - a. Why is Jesus so deeply moved?
 - b. Why does Martha object to Jesus' command, "Take away the stone"?
 - c. Jesus tells Martha, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God"? What is Jesus communicating to Martha?
2. Read vv.41-44. Why does Jesus pray?
3. Read vv.45-48. What various responses did the raising of Lazarus produce? What is each group's view of Jesus? Why didn't Jesus' raising of Lazarus instantly convince everyone that Jesus is God?
4. Read vv.49-53. How does Caiaphas, the high priest, propose to solve "the Jesus problem"? How does John, the author of this gospel, see this as God's plan unfolding?
5. Read vv.54-57. How does Jesus respond to this developing situation? What are the crowds expecting as the Passover approaches?

Going A Step Further...

- At WEPC, we begin each worship service with a Scripture reading. We do this because we believe that God Himself has brought us together and He always has the first word in our meeting. **Read this week's *Call to Worship*** from [Psalm 105:1-3](#). The Psalmist calls God's people to "*Make known among the nations what He has done*". Take time to pray together in light of this passage, thanking God for His many blessings.
- Each week in worship, we confess our sins and then hear a Scripture verse that encourages us with the Good News that Jesus loves and forgives sinners. **This week's *Words of Encouragement*** came from [Colossians 2:9-10,13](#). What do these verses teach us about the identity and purpose of Jesus?
- As a part of worship [we sing songs and hymns that further amplify each Sunday's message](#). This week, we sang Charles Wesley's great hymn, "[Rejoice the Lord is King](#)", written as a reflection on the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In this song, Wesley describes some of the important implications that Jesus is Lord. What are they? What do we need King Jesus to do in our hearts and our world these days? Pray for one another, for the world, and thank God that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org
To hear sermons and access past study guides visit www.wepc.org/archivedsermons

Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [John 11:38-57](#)

Is Jesus Really God?

- “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us.” (*C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity*)

What Jesus Said

- “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.” ([Daniel 7:13](#))
- “For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.” ([Matthew 12:8](#))

What Others Said (His own brother)

- “My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.” ([James 2:1](#))

What He Did (calmed storms, healed the sick, fed thousands from nothing)

- [John 9:1-33](#)
- He raised the dead (including Himself)
- Ironically, it maybe because He was God, not just that He claimed to be God, that He was killed

Why It Matters

- The atonement
- His ministry
- “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” ([Hebrews 4:14-16](#))