

ST PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Session 2

Who is

Jesus



WELCOME TO ALPHA – A SERIES OF INTERACTIVE SESSIONS TO DISCUSS LIFE AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN AN INFORMAL, FUN AND FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT.

After each talk, there is a time for discussion with the people in your pew, during which you can ask questions, delve into different issues and find out what others think.

This is your guide, so use it however you like. Write, scribble, note, jot, or doodle. Whatever helps.

After each discussion there will be a short time of worship and prayer during which you are invited to sing and pray along with the rest of the congregation, or if you prefer simply listen and observe.

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Did Jesus exist?

- Evidence outside the New Testament about Jesus includes:
 - Tacitus and Suetonius, Roman historians
 - Josephus, Jewish historian
- Evidence within the New Testament

How do we know that what was written down in the New Testament has not been changed over the years?

ANCIENT WRITINGS

WORK	WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPY	TIME LAPSE	COPIES
HERODOTUS	488–428 bc	ad 900	1,300 years	8
THUCYDIDES	c. 460–400 bc	c. ad 900	1,300 years	8
TACITUS	ad 100	ad 1100	1,000 years	20
CAESAR'S GALLIC WAR	58–50 bc	ad 900	950 years	9–10
LIVY'S ROMAN HISTORY	59 bc–ad 17	ad 900	900 years	20
NEW TESTAMENT	ad 40–100	ad 130 (full manuscripts ad 350)	30–310 years	5,000 + Greek 10,000 Latin 9,300 others

Was Jesus fully human?

- He had a human body.
 - tired (John 4:6)
 - hungry (Matthew 4:2)
- He had human emotions.
 - anger (Mark 11:15–17)
 - love (Mark 10:21)
 - sadness (John 11:32–36)
- He had human experiences.
 - temptation (Mark 1:13)
 - learning (Luke 2:46–52)
 - work (Mark 6:3)
 - obedience (Luke 2:51)

Was He more than a man, a great human, a religious teacher? (Matthew 16:13–16)

1. WHAT DID HE SAY ABOUT HIMSELF?

Teaching centered on himself

- “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35)
- “If the Son sets you free, you are truly free.” (John 8:36, NLT)
- “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12)
- “I am the way and the truth and the life.” (John 14:6)
- “Come to me....” (Matthew 11:28–29)
- Receive me—receive God. (Matthew 10:40)
- Welcome me—welcome God. (Mark 9:37)
- “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14:9)

His indirect claims

- To forgive sins (Mark 2:5)
- To judge the world (Matthew 25:31, 32, 40, 45)

His direct claims

- Messiah (Mark 14:61–62)
- Son of God (Mark 14:61)
- God the Son (John 20:26–29)
- “I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30)

Author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Oxford historian C. S. Lewis wrote:

“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 (insane)... 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 (insane) or something worse... but let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

2. WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE TO SUPPORT HIS CLAIMS?

- His teaching (Mark 12:31; Luke 6:31; Matthew 5:44)
- His life/works (John 2:1–11; 10:37–38)
- His character (Luke 23:34)
- His fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy
- His conquest of death

Evidence for the resurrection:

His absence from the tomb

- Theories:
 - Jesus did not die (John 19:33–34)
 - Disciples stole the body
 - Authorities stole the body
 - Robbers stole the body (John 20:1–9)

His presence with the disciples

- Did they hallucinate?
- Number of appearances over a six-week period 11+ appearances 500+ people
- Nature of appearances (Luke 24:36–43)

Immediate effect

- Birth and growth of Christian church

Effect down the ages

- Experience of Christians down the ages– Over 2,300 million Christians in the world today

RECOMMENDED READING:

***Mere Christianity* - C. S. Lewis; *The Case for Christ* - Lee Strobel; *Orthodoxy* - G. K. Chesterton; *Jesus Is* - Judah Smith**

July 17	10:00 am Holy Communion Alpha – Why did Jesus die?
Music Leader	Glenna Geer
Layreader	Marg Petrie
Reader	Glenna Geer Isaiah 53: 3-7
Greeters	B & A Kennedy
A/V	Elaine Robichaud
Sunday School	Pat & Don Mackay
Chancel	Jean Bates / Shirley Stevenson
Counters	Alice Kennedy / Myra Stites