

# **EQTH105 Basic Bible Doctrine**

## **Unit 4a Who Is Jesus?**

Presented by the



**LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE**  
CAPITAL SEMINARY & GRADUATE SCHOOL

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Why is it so important to consider the life of Jesus Christ? Granted, he is a famous historical figure, but what makes Jesus so special? Well, the reason that it is important to examine the life of Jesus goes beyond historical curiosity. When Jesus came to earth, he claimed that the eternal destiny of every man, woman, and child would depend on how they viewed him. If his claims are true, the decision we make about Jesus will determine whether we spend eternity with him or without him. And nothing could be more important.

The message of the Bible can be summed up as follows. In the beginning, an all-powerful, personal God created the heavens and the earth. In his final act of creation, God created man and woman. God put them in a perfect environment, giving them everything they needed for happiness. But the man and woman sinned against God, disobeying the only commandment he had given them. Their disobedience led to a separation between them and God. They were banished from the paradise that God had provided for them. But God did not want it to stay that way. He promised that he would take care of the sin that separated humanity from himself. The Old Testament contains a number of promises that a savior or a messiah would come and solve the sin problems. The New Testament opens with the birth of this promised one. His name is Jesus, which means “Yahweh is my salvation.” He is also given the title Christ, which means the Messiah.

Some 30 years after Jesus’ birth, a rugged individual named John the Baptist appeared in the Judean Desert, announcing the soon appearance of the promised Messiah. When Jesus arrived at the Jordan River where John was baptizing, he was identified as the Lamb of God, the one who would take away the sins of the world. After he was baptized, Jesus was tempted for 40 days in the wilderness by the devil. Once his temptation was complete, the sinless Jesus began his public ministry. Jesus’ public ministry lasted some three short years, but in that time, he lived a life such as no one has lived before or since. He did things that no one else has ever done. He healed the lame, the blind, the deaf, and the mute. On one occasion, Jesus caused a storm to immediately cease. His friend Lazarus was four days dead, but Jesus brought him back to life. The people of his day, upon seeing the miracles that Jesus did, testified, “We never saw anything like this.” [Mark 2:12]

Jesus also said things such as no one else has ever said. After finishing the Sermon on the Mount, the Scripture records that the people were astonished at his teaching. He spoke to them as one who had authority. Jesus claimed authority. Authority over disease, authority over nature, authority over the supernatural, and authority over life and death. He claimed to be the one who had the power to forgive sins, to raise the dead on judgment day, and to grant eternal life to whoever believed in him. He was betrayed by one of his own disciples and crucified under the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, yet the New Testament records that three days later, he appeared to Peter and to others alive. He had risen from the dead just as he said he would. By doing this, Jesus demonstrated the truth of his claims. The Bible says that Jesus’ death on the cross was for the sins of the world. His death has made it possible for mankind to be back in relationship with God. One must believe in Jesus and accept his sacrifice on their behalf to have forgiveness of sins and life everlasting. The Bible also says that Jesus will return again someday. Those who believe in him will enjoy everlasting life. Those who do not believe in him will spend eternity apart from God.

Jesus Christ's identity is of the utmost importance. It is crucial that we consider him and see if he is the one whom he made himself out to be. If he is the eternal God who became man, then what we decide about him will determine our eternal destiny. There is no issue more important. In fact, not only is there no issue more important; the entirety of Scripture is wrapped around the person of Jesus Christ. If there was a one-word title for the Bible other than the word Bible, it would be redemption. From Genesis to Revelation, 31,102 verses altogether describe God's plan and process for reaching out and relating to mankind, and then providing a way for man to reach back to God. That way is Jesus, who told us himself the entire Scripture is about him. He said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness of me... For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me." [John 5:39, 46]

In countless places, the Old Testament was preparing the way for the Messiah. Isaiah wrote, "A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.'" The entire Old Testament was looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. Everything was pointing toward him. But it is really in the gospels that we see the manifestation of the Christ, the Messiah, the appearance of the long-awaited Messiah. As I shared a minute ago, John the Baptist said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." [John 1:29] Jesus, the Messiah, arrived as Isaiah had predicted.

And then after the death and resurrection of Jesus, his message was to go out to the entire world. The Book of Acts records this propagation of the message of Christ. The key verse of the Book of Acts is in the first chapter. It reads, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth." [Acts 1:8] So we have said, as far as Scripture is concerned, the main character is Jesus Christ, and the New Testament was written to create belief in him. This is the claim it makes for itself. We read "many other signs Jesus performed in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book, but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that in believing, you might have life in his name." [John 20:30-31] These verses are highly instructive. John's purpose in writing was to create in his readers belief in Jesus. He tells us that he was selective in the signs that he recorded about the life and ministry of Jesus, but that the signs that were given were meant to cause the reader to believe. This is his stated purpose. The remainder of the New Testament echoes that same purpose.

But who is this Jesus Christ? Well, to begin, we can read what Jesus himself said about himself. When Jesus came to earth, he made a variety of claims about himself. One thing that Jesus claimed was that he was the only possible way that a person could have a relationship with God. There are many who do not like this assertion because it seems so narrow-minded. Others try to deny that Jesus said or meant this. But the record is clear. And whether a person likes it or not, and whether a person believes it or not, Jesus made the colossal claim that nobody could know the living God except by means of him. Jesus told the people of his day, "For if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." [John 8:24] To his disciples in the upper room, he said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me." [John 14:1] But my favorite summary of Jesus is written in the gospel of John. It says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." [John 14:6]

The Book of Acts also makes the claim that Jesus is the only way to reach God. The apostle Peter said, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:12] This is a critical point. There is no salvation outside of the person of Jesus Christ. He is the only way by which a person can be saved. The apostle Paul echoes this same thought. He also stated that Jesus was the only way to get to God. He wrote, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the human Christ Jesus." [1Ti 2:5] Paul also wrote, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." [Rom 6:23] Later in Romans, he wrote, "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." [Rom 10:9-10]

According to the Scripture, there is one God and one go-between, Jesus Christ. There is no other way. The idea that Jesus is the only way to get to God was not invented by the church, but was central to his message. Therefore, according to the New Testament, there is no other way to reach God except through Jesus. Whether a person believes it or not, the record is clear. Jesus himself believed and taught that only through him could a person have their sins forgiven and come to know the living God.

Now, these are heavy words, I know. But as we consider this, there are two basic questions that need to be answered about the person of Jesus Christ. The first question, Jesus himself asked his disciples. He said, "But what about you?" he asked, "Who do you say that I am?" [Mat 16:15] Pontius Pilate asked the second question. "What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ?" [Mat 27:22] According to Scripture, the eternal destiny of each individual depends on how they answer these questions: "Who do you say that I am?" and "What shall we do with Christ?" The stated purpose of the New Testament is to create belief in the reader that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Those who believe this message have life through his name. The specific claim of the New Testament is that there is only one God, and the only way to get to the one God is through Jesus Christ. All others are pretenders. All other roads are false. There is no salvation outside the person of Jesus Christ. This is the claim, not something that the church later invented, not something that later writers added in. Two basic questions about Jesus need to be answered by each individual: "Who do you think that he is?" and "What will you do with him?"