

Jesus: Is He God?

QUICK REFERENCE COUNSELING KEYS Excerpt

Two Crucial Questions . . .

In your lifetime, you will be asked very few questions that have the potential of changing your life forever. These are two of the most crucial questions you will ever be asked: “Is Jesus God?” and “What will you do with Jesus?”

Throughout His days on earth, opinions about Jesus varied greatly. Jewish leaders decided He was a deceiver of the people. Roman officials thought He was a threat to civil peace. During His earthly ministry, His own brothers didn’t support Him—He was just their brother. However, at the beginning of His public ministry, when John the Baptist saw Jesus, he was in awe and proclaimed,

*“Behold, the Lamb of God,
who takes away the sin of the world!”
(John 1:29)*

Q: “Why is it important that Jesus is God? Isn’t it enough that He, like Abraham (Romans 4:3), was a righteous man?”

Because Jesus—as *the spotless Lamb of God*—was sinless (see Hebrews 9:14; Exodus 12:5), He offers the only pure sacrifice (shedding His blood on the cross) that can take away the sins of all humanity. Only by being God, does Jesus have the power to grant forgiveness and eternal life to those who entrust their lives to Him.

*“Knowing that you were ransomed
from the futile ways inherited from your
forefathers, not with perishable things
such as silver or gold, but with the
precious blood of Christ, like that
of a lamb without blemish or spot.”*

(1 Peter 1:18–19)

Did Jesus Exist or Not?

• Josephus, a Jewish historian in the first century recorded the existence of Jesus:
“Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ.” (Antiquities of the Jews 18:63)

• Tacitus, an early Roman historian recorded the existence of Jesus:
“Nero [the Roman Emperor] created scapegoats and subjected to the most refined tortures those whom the common people called “Christians” . . . the author of this name, Christ, during the reign of Tiberius, had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate.” (Annals 15.44)¹

• Pliny wrote in AD 96 to the Roman emperor about his encounter with Christians:
“They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up. . . .” (Pliny the Younger, Letters 10:96–97)²

The Truths about Jesus

- Jesus was an amazing teacher. (Mark 1:22)
- Jesus performed miracles. (John 10:32)
- Jesus gives life. (John 5:21)
- Jesus has the authority to judge. (John 5:22)
- Jesus died for our sins. (1 Peter 3:18)
- Jesus provides salvation. (1 Thessalonians 5:9)
- Jesus bestows the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:33)

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.”
(Galatians 1:6–7)

Key Verse to Memorize

*“In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.”*
(John 1:1)

Key Passage to Read and Reread The Gospel of John

Testimonies to the Deity of Christ

- Paul refers to Jesus as “God” and “Savior.” (Titus 2:13)
- Peter refers to Jesus as “God” and “Savior.” (2 Peter 1:1)
- Thomas refers to Jesus as “My Lord and my God.” (John 20:28)
- John refers to Jesus as “the Word” and as “God.” (John 1:1)
- Jesus even says that He and God the Father are one. (John 10:30)
- In Hebrews, Jesus is called “God.” (Hebrews 1:8)
- In 1 John, Jesus is called “the true God and eternal life.” (1 John 5:20)
- In Philippians, Jesus is described as “in very nature God.” (Philippians 2:5–6 NIV)
- In Colossians, Jesus is fully God. (Colossians 2:9–10)
- In Romans, Jesus is called “God over all.” (Romans 9:5)

*“To them belong the patriarchs,
and from their race, according
to the flesh, is the Christ who
is God over all, blessed forever.”*
(Romans 9:5)

Proof of Jesus' Deity

Prophecies fulfilled by Jesus—Compare the Old Testament prophecies with their New Testament fulfillments. (2 Peter 1:21)

Resurrection of Jesus from the dead—Compare the false theories with the true facts of the resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:7–8)

Oral testimony of witnesses and martyrs—Listen with your heart to witnesses who risked their lives to proclaim the truth. (John 20:28)

Oral testimony of changed lives—Consider how the lives of those who have placed their faith in the power of the risen Christ have been changed. (Romans 6:4)

Functions of Jesus that only God can perform—Examine the supernatural acts of Jesus that reveal He is God. (Mark 2:5–7)

Related Topics . . .

- Atheism & Agnosticism:
The Great Debate
- The Bible: Is It Reliable?
Truth on Trial
- Forgiveness:
How to Forgive . . . When You Don't Feel Like It
- God: Who Is He?
Who Do You Say That He Is?
- The Holy Spirit:
Living Free in the Power and Peace of the Spirit
- Unbelieving Mate:
Becoming a Winsome Witness

1. For this section see Kay Marshall Strom and Douglas R. Donnelly, *The Complete Adoption Handbook*, rev. and updated ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 138-9.
2. Strom and Donnelly, *The Complete Adoption Handbook*, 139.
3. Frederica Mathewes-Green, *Real Choices: Offering Practical, Life-Affirming Alternatives to Abortion* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1994), 128; Sylvia Boothe, *No Easy Choices* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope, 1990), 43-56.

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Jesus: Is He God?:
Is the Deity of Christ Defendable?

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