

## Alpha Session 2 – Jesus: Who Is he?

**BIG IDEA:** Jesus Christ is the most famous person in history and there's evidence to suggest Jesus was more than a great religious teacher. His life, death and resurrection is the centrepiece of the Christian faith. The resurrection not only suggests that God exists, but also that God has revealed himself through Jesus.

### Questions:

#### 1. Why do you think Jesus is so famous?

- What is Jesus most known for?
- What stands out most to you about Jesus?

#### 2. Who do people think Jesus is?

- Why do you think there are so many different opinions about Jesus?
- What do you think about the things Jesus said and taught?

*['I am the way', 'love your enemies', 'I am the life', 'I am the truth', 'I am the bread of life', 'I and the Father are one'.]*

#### 3. What parts of the life of Jesus stand out to you?

*(Examples: his teaching, his claims, healing, his death on a cross, his resurrection from the dead, his compassion for the outcasts.)*

Why do you think Jesus spent so much time with outcasts, the sick and the poor? What do you think about the claim that Jesus is God?

### Did Jesus exist?

- Evidence outside the New Testament about Jesus includes:

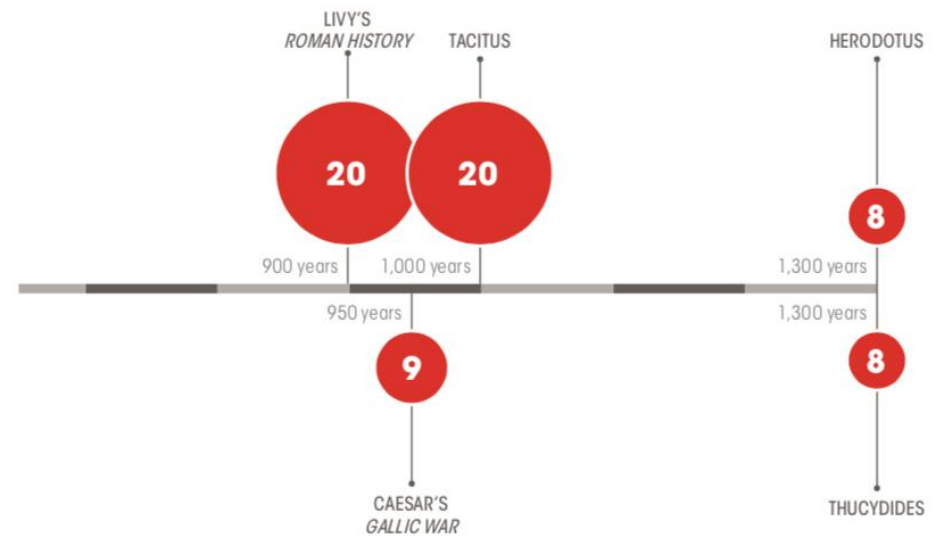
- Tacitus and Suetonius, Roman historians
- Josephus, Jewish historian

- 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?

WORK	WHEN 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

# Ancient Writings



### 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)

### What did he say about himself?

#### **Teaching centred on himself**

- 'I am the bread of life' (John 6:35)
- 'If the Son sets you free, you really will be 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)
- If you have seen me you have seen God (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 patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.'

### 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

### Other key quotes and Scriptures

“When other religious teachers might say, ‘This is the way to full life,’ Jesus said, ‘I am the life.’ When others might say, ‘Here is the truth’, Jesus said, ‘I am the truth.’”

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” JESUS (MATTHEW 11:28)

“Christianity is not an emotion – it’s not true because I want it to be true. It’s true because the actual tomb is empty. It’s based on a historical event.” MARK CLARK

“I and the Father are one.” JESUS (JOHN 10:30)

### Recommended Reading:

*Mere Christianity*

C. S. Lewis

*Jesus is*

Judah Smith