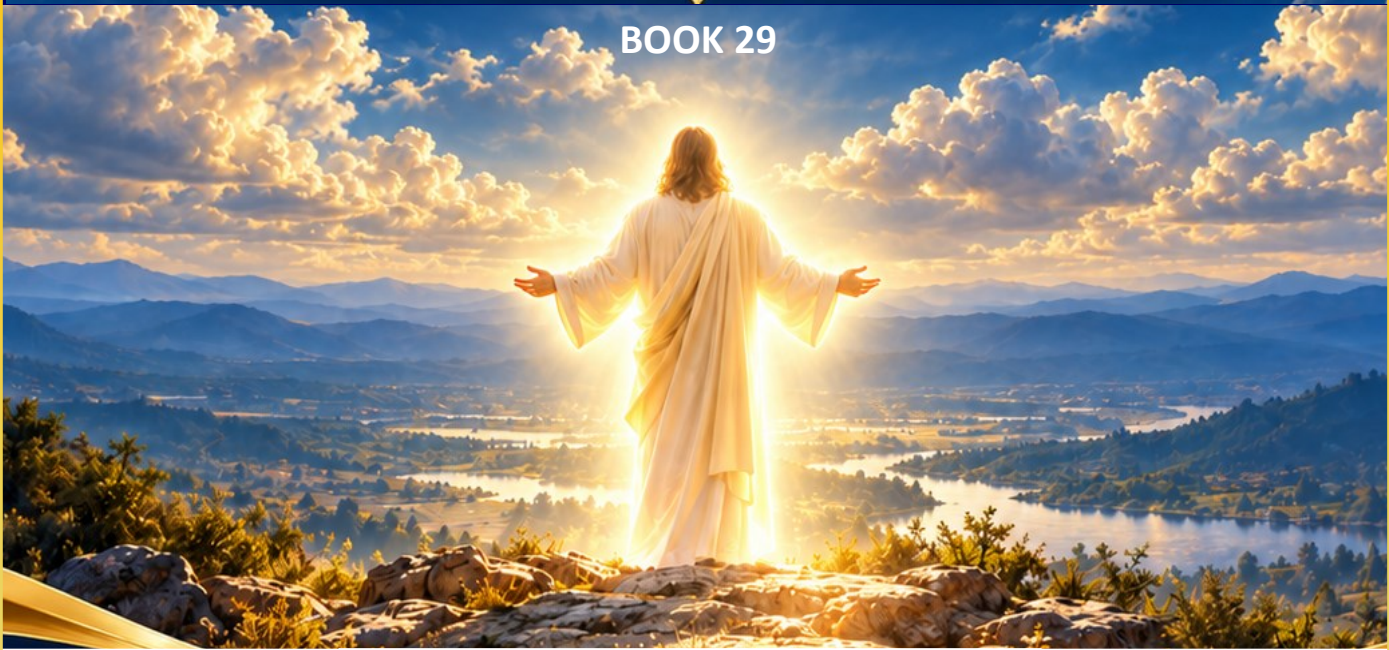


WHY SHOULD HUMANITY FOLLOW JESUS AT ALL?

BOOK 29



WHO IS JESUS CHRIST, THAT HUMANITY SHOULD FOLLOW HIM AT ALL?



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To know who Jesus Christ truly is, we must begin
where we would with any man who ever lived:
with His own words, His own deeds, His life
and the truth of His claims.

*To women are born many men, but one was unlike any other.
This is his story.*

Introduction

Throughout human history, remarkable individuals have emerged who profoundly influenced human civilisation. There have been philosophers who challenged human reasoning, teachers who transformed education, rulers who established great empires, religious leaders who inspired millions, scientists whose discoveries shaped human imaginations and reformers who changed the moral direction of societies.

Among them were Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Buddha, Moses, Muhammad, Alexander the great, Mahatma Gandhi, Sir Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Queen Elizabeth, and many others. Some lived centuries before Jesus Christ. Others came centuries after Him. Their teachings have survived generations. Their names remain embedded in history. Their followers continue to study their lives and preserve their ideas.

Yet Jesus Christ occupies a distinctive position in human history. He was born into an ordinary family, lived without worldly wealth, never commanded an earthly army, never governed a political empire, and left no writings known to have been authored by His own hand. His public ministry was relatively brief. He was rejected by many of His contemporaries and eventually executed by crucifixion. And yet, approximately two thousand years later, billions of people across nations, cultures, languages, and generations continue to worship Him, pray in His name, pattern their lives after His teachings, and place their hope of eternal life in Him. A hope of all nations.

What explains this extraordinary phenomenon? Is it simply the power of His teachings? Is it the moral excellence of His character? Is it the extraordinary claims He made about Himself? Is it His relationship with God? Is it His death and resurrection? Or is there something about His very identity that fundamentally distinguishes Him from every other person who has ever lived? These questions form the intellectual and spiritual foundation of this book.

The uniqueness of Jesus Christ cannot be adequately explained by the greatness of His teachings, the purity of His moral character, the miracles He performed, or the extraordinary influence He has exercised upon human civilisation. His uniqueness must ultimately be investigated in the deeper question of His identity: who He was before He entered the world, who He revealed Himself to be while living among humanity, what He accomplished through His life and death, and who He remains today. For if the testimony of Scripture concerning Him is true, then Jesus Christ is not merely another remarkable figure in human history, but the Son of the living God, through whom humanity is invited to know the eternal Father and receive eternal life. This is the proposition this book investigate, rather than simply assume.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 — **WHO IS JESUS CHRIST? His Identity and Origin.**

Chapter 2 — **WHAT MANNER OF PERSON WAS JESUS CHRIST?**

Chapter 3 — **WHAT MAKES JESUS CHRIST UNIQUE AMONG ALL
WHO HAVE EVER LIVED?**

Chapter 4 — **WHY DID JESUS CHRIST COME INTO THE WORLD,
AND WHY DID HE LEAVE?**

Chapter 5 — **WHY SHOULD HUMANITY FOLLOW JESUS AT ALL?**

Chapter 1

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

His Identity and Origin

1.0 The Mystery of His Identity and Origin

Before asking why humanity should follow Jesus Christ, we must first ask the question upon which every other question about Him depends: **Who is He?** That question sounds simple, but it reaches into some of the deepest revelations of Scripture. Jesus Christ has been described in many ways throughout history. He has been called a teacher, prophet, reformer, healer, miracle worker, revolutionary, moral philosopher, founder of Christianity, and one of the most influential individuals ever to walk upon the earth. Yet none of these descriptions, by itself, adequately explains the Jesus presented in the Bible.

- A teacher may instruct.
- A philosopher may reason.
- A prophet may speak on behalf of God.
- A reformer may challenge society.
- A religious leader may gather followers.

But Jesus spoke and acted in ways that force us to ask whether these ordinary categories are sufficient to contain Him.

He did not merely speak about truth. He said:

□ [“I am the way, the truth, and the life...” — John 14:6](#)

He did not merely teach about resurrection. He declared:

□ [“I am the resurrection, and the life...” — John 11:25](#)

He did not merely direct humanity toward God. He said:

□ [“he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...” — John 14:9](#)

He did not merely claim to know God. He spoke of having come directly from Him:

□ [“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world...” — John 16:28](#)

And when speaking of Abraham, who had lived many centuries before His earthly birth, Jesus made the extraordinary declaration:

□ [“Before Abraham was, I am.” — John 8:58](#)

Therefore, the investigation into Jesus cannot begin at Bethlehem. His birth in Bethlehem was not the beginning of His existence according to the testimony of Scripture. Bethlehem was His entrance into human life. To understand who Jesus Christ truly is, we must go farther back.

- Beyond Bethlehem.
- Beyond Mary.
- Beyond Nazareth.
- Beyond Abraham.
- Beyond the prophets.
- Beyond the foundation of the world itself.

We must ask:

Where did He come from?

1.1 Jesus Christ Before Bethlehem

The Gospel of John deliberately begins its account of Jesus in a very different place from the other Gospel narratives. Matthew begins with genealogy. Mark begins with John the Baptist. Luke begins with events surrounding the birth of Christ. But John reaches backward beyond human history.

He writes:

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

Before the mountains existed, before creation existed, before stars, before angels, before Adam breathed, before the sun was appointed to rule the day, before there was human history at all, Christ already existed. Scripture places the Word there.

John continues:

□ **“The same was in the beginning with God.” — John 1:2**

Then:

□ **“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” — John 1:3**

And finally John identifies this Word:

□ **“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” — John 1:14**

Meaning the eternal entered time. The invisible became visible. The uncreated entered creation. The One who later walked the roads of Galilee existed before He became flesh. The child seen in Bethlehem was therefore not merely a human being beginning His existence. Someone who already existed had entered humanity. This changes everything. Jesus Christ cannot be understood merely by studying what happened after His birth. His human life must be understood in the light of His existence before that birth.

He Himself testified:

□ **“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” — John 6:38**

Those words deserve careful attention. Christ did not describe Himself merely as one who had been born upon the earth. He said:

“I came down from heaven.”

There was therefore a “before” to His earthly life. There was somewhere from which He came. And there was Someone who sent Him. Already we begin to see that the identity of Jesus is inseparably connected with His relationship to God the Father.

1.2. The Son of the Living God

One of the clearest descriptions of Christ's identity occurs in a conversation between Jesus and His disciples. Jesus asked them:

❑ “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” — Matthew 16:13

The answers were varied. Some believed He was John the Baptist. Others Elijah. Others Jeremiah. Others one of the prophets. Humanity was already trying to categorise Him. They recognised that something extraordinary was present before them, yet they did not fully understand who He was.

Then Jesus made the question personal:

❑ “But whom say ye that I am?” — Matthew 16:15

Peter answered:

❑ “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” — Matthew 16:16

Jesus responded:

❑ “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” — Matthew 16:17

This declaration stands at the heart of the identity of Jesus. He is **the Christ**. He is **the Son of the living God**. Those two truths must not be rushed over. “Christ” describes His anointed mission. “Son of God” speaks to His identity and relationship with the Father. He was the natural son, literally begotten of the Father.

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus repeatedly spoke of God as His Father. He did not merely speak of God as Creator. He did not merely call Him Lord. He spoke of a personal relationship:

❑ “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” — John 5:17

Again:

❑ “I and my Father are one.” — John 10:30

Again:

❑ “the Father is in me, and I in him.” — John 10:38

Again:

❑ “I came forth from the Father...” — John 16:28

The identity of Jesus therefore cannot be separated from the Father. To understand the Son, we must understand His relationship with the Father.

1.3. The One Who Came Forth From the Father

John 16:28 contains one of Christ's most remarkable statements concerning Himself:

“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.”

The verse contains four movements.

1. Christ **came forth from the Father**.
2. He **came into the world**.
3. He would **leave the world**.
4. He would **return to the Father**.

His earthly life therefore appears within a much greater history. It did not begin in Bethlehem and terminate at Calvary.

- He came from somewhere.
- He came from Someone.
- He entered the world for a purpose.
- And after completing His earthly work, He returned to the One from whom He had come.

Jesus repeatedly demonstrated an awareness of this prior existence. During His prayer shortly before His crucifixion He said:

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” — John 17:5

This statement takes us beyond creation itself. Before “the world was,” Christ speaks of having possessed glory **with the Father**. This was not the language of a man whose existence began approximately thirty three years earlier in Bethlehem.

Christ remembered a glory that preceded the world. He remembered being with the Father. And He desired to return to that glory.

1.4. The One Who Created All Things

Scripture goes still further. Jesus did not merely exist before the world. He was actively involved in its creation.

John declares:

- “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”— John 1:3

Paul writes:

- “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible...”— Colossians 1:16

He continues:

- “all things were created by him, and for him:”— Colossians 1:16

And then:

- “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” — Colossians 1:17

This introduces one of the greatest distinctions between Christ and every ordinary historical person ever lived.

- Every philosopher was born into a world already existing.
- Every prophet entered a creation that preceded him.
- Every king inherited a world he did not make.
- Every teacher taught within an order of life he did not create.
- But Scripture presents Jesus differently.

The world into which He entered was a world that had been made through Him. John expresses the tragedy of this reality:

- “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” — John 1:10

Few sentences in Scripture are more astonishing.

The world was made by Him.

Yet:

the world knew Him not.

The Creator stood among His creatures unrecognised. The One through whom humanity had received existence walked among human beings who did not understand His identity. This begins to explain why the question “Who is Jesus Christ?” is far deeper than a question about an influential religious teacher.

1.5. The Image of the Invisible God

Scripture presents another extraordinary dimension of Christ's identity:

❑ “Who is the image of the invisible God...” — Colossians 1:15

God is invisible to humanity. Yet Jesus came to make the Father known. John declares:

❑ “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son... he hath declared him.” — John 1:18

Jesus therefore did not merely come to tell humanity information about God. He came to **reveal God**. This is why He could say:

❑ “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...” — John 14:9

This does not mean that Jesus was saying He was the Father Himself, for throughout Scripture He speaks to the Father, comes from the Father, obeys the Father, and returns to the Father. Rather, He perfectly revealed the Father's character. To know what God is like, Jesus directs us to look at Him.

- Observe His compassion.
- Observe His mercy.
- Observe His hatred of hypocrisy.
- Observe His tenderness toward the broken.
- Observe His patience with the ignorant.
- Observe His treatment of sinners.
- Observe His willingness to forgive.
- Observe His love for His enemies.
- Observe His obedience.
- Observe His sacrifice.

In Christ, the invisible character of God became visible in human life. The Father was being revealed through His Son. Jesus said:

❑ “I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.” — John 8:28

And:

❑ “he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.” — John 8:29

Here we begin approaching the inner person of Jesus. His life was centred not upon Himself, but upon His Father. His words reflected His Father. His works reflected His Father. His character reflected His Father. His purpose came from His Father. His obedience was directed toward His Father. His entire earthly life was a revelation of the One who had sent Him.

1.6. The Only Begotten Son

John gives Jesus a description that deserves careful reflection:

□ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...” — John 3:16

Again:

□ “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” — John 3:18

And John writes:

□ “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world...” — 1 John 4:9

Before asking exactly what every dimension of “only begotten” means, we should first allow the language of Scripture to stand.

- The Father **gave His Son**.
- The Father **sent His Son**.
- The Son **came forth from the Father**.
- The Son **came into the world**.
- The Son **revealed the Father**.
- The Son **returned to the Father**.

Therefore, for God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,—this is not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

This Father-Son relationship is not incidental to the Gospel. It lies at its very centre. The Gospel is not merely that God sent a messenger. It is that:

□ “the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” — 1 John 4:14

The identity of Jesus as the begotten Son therefore stands at the centre of why He came and why humanity should take Him seriously.

1.7. Jesus Knew Who He Was

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Gospel accounts is the clarity with which Jesus understood His own identity. He did not appear to be searching for Himself. He did not gradually discover His mission through philosophical contemplation. He spoke with extraordinary certainty about where He came from, why He was here, who had sent Him, what He had come to accomplish, and where He was going.

He said:

□ “I know whence I came, and whither I go...” — John 8:14

- He knew His origin.
- He knew His destination.
- He knew His Father.
- He knew His mission.
- He knew what awaited Him.
- He knew that He would die.
- He knew that He would rise again.
- He knew that He would return to the Father.

Even His enemies noticed the extraordinary authority with which He spoke. Matthew records:

□ “For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”
— Matthew 7:29

Jesus did not constantly appeal to previous human authorities to validate His words. Repeatedly He declared: “*But I say unto you...*” There was something profoundly different about the consciousness with which He spoke. Yet this authority was never presented as proud self-exaltation. Paradoxically, the One who possessed such authority was also profoundly humble.

He said:

□ “I can of mine own self do nothing...” — John 5:30

And:

□ “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”
— John 5:30

Here we encounter one of the great mysteries of Christ's character: **extraordinary authority combined with extraordinary dependence upon His Father**. He knew who He was, yet He lived in perfect submission. He possessed authority, yet He served. He was honoured by heaven, yet He washed men's feet. He had come from glory, yet He accepted poverty. He had participated in creation, yet He allowed His own creatures to reject Him. This is not merely theological information. It begins to reveal the kind of person Jesus was.

1.8. He Came Unto His Own, and His Own Received Him Not

Perhaps one of the saddest descriptions of Christ's earthly life is found in John:

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”— John 1:11

Why? How could people who possessed the Scriptures fail to recognise the One to whom those Scriptures pointed? How could religious leaders study Moses and the prophets while rejecting the One whom Moses and the prophets had foretold? Jesus confronted this contradiction:

❑ “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”— John 5:39

Then He added:

❑ “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”— John 5:40

- They possessed Scripture.
- They possessed religion.
- They possessed traditions.
- They possessed temples.
- They possessed ceremonies.
- They possessed teachers.

Yet when the One to whom these things pointed stood among them, they failed to recognise Him. Why? Part of the answer appears in the expectations people had constructed.

- They expected Christ to fit their understanding — When He did not fit it, many rejected Him.
- They expected worldly greatness — He came in humility.
- They expected political liberation — He spoke of liberation from sin.
- They admired religious status— He exposed religious hypocrisy.
- They valued outward appearances — He searched the heart.
- They sought earthly power— He declared: “My kingdom is not of this world...” — John 18:36

Jesus was not merely unknown because He was hidden. He was also unknown because humanity frequently looked for something different from what God had revealed. This raises an uncomfortable possibility for every generation: **Could humanity still misunderstand Jesus while claiming to know Him?** Could we know His name but not His character? Could we defend doctrines about Him while failing to understand His heart? Could we speak about Christ while following a picture of Him formed more by tradition than by His own testimony? If the people who possessed the Scriptures in His own generation could misunderstand Him, then every generation must return carefully to the Scriptures and ask again: **Who is Jesus Christ?**

1.9. More Than Knowing About Him

There is a difference between knowing facts about a person and knowing the person himself. One may know when Jesus was born, where He lived, the names of His disciples, where He was crucified, and the events associated with His resurrection, yet still have only a superficial understanding of Him.

Paul expressed a much deeper desire:

❑ “That I may know him...” — Philippians 3:10

Not merely know **about** Him. Know **Him**.

Jesus Himself connected eternal life with this knowledge:

❑ “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” — John 17:3

This means that our investigation cannot remain merely intellectual. The question “Who is Jesus Christ?” eventually becomes personal.

- Who is He to me?
- Can His words be trusted?
- Does His character justify my confidence?
- Does His life reveal God truthfully?
- Was He truly sent from the Father?
- Did He truly conquer death?
- Does He live now?
- Can He save?
- Can He transform?
- Can He forgive?
- Can He fulfil the hope He offers humanity?

These are not merely historical questions. They concern life itself.

1.10. The Question That Divides Humanity

“Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”

Jesus once asked His disciples:

□ “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” — Matthew 16:13

Humanity has been answering that question ever since.

- A prophet.
- A teacher.
- A philosopher.
- A revolutionary.
- A moral genius.
- A religious founder.
- A mystery.
- A great man.

But Jesus did not stop with humanity's opinions. He asked again his disciples:

□ “But whom say ye that I am?” — Matthew 16:15

That second question removes the safety of distance. It is no longer about what historians think. It is no longer about what churches teach. It is no longer about what civilisation has done with Christianity. It becomes personal. **Whom say ye that I am?**

And Peter's answer reaches into the heart of the Christian claim:

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” — Matthew 16:16

If that confession is true, then Jesus cannot simply be placed alongside the great figures of history as one more remarkable teacher among many. His identity changes the entire discussion. For then humanity is not merely dealing with another person who discovered profound truths about life. Humanity is confronting the Son of God who says that He came from the Father, entered the world, revealed the Father, gave His life for humanity, conquered death, returned to the Father, and will come again. And therefore, before asking: Why should humanity follow Him? We must first understand: **Who is this Jesus Christ whom we are being asked to follow?** The journey has only begun. For knowing where He came from does not yet tell us fully what kind of person He was.

We must now move from His identity to His inner character. What was in the heart of Jesus Christ? What did He love? What caused Him sorrow? What angered Him? Why did sinners feel safe approaching Him while hypocrites feared His words? What was the source of His extraordinary compassion? Why could temptation not overcome Him? Why did He obey His Father even unto death? And what does His character reveal about the God whom He came to make known? These questions lead us into the next chapter: **WHAT MANNER OF PERSON WAS JESUS CHRIST?**

Chapter 2

WHAT MANNER OF PERSON WAS JESUS CHRIST?

*The Heart, Mind, Nature, and Character
of the Son of God*

2.0 The Heart, Mind, Nature, and Character of the Son of God

Knowing where Jesus Christ came from is not enough. A person may know His origin, His titles, His miracles, His claims, and even the circumstances of His death, yet still fail to understand the kind of person He truly was. To know Jesus Christ deeply, we must ask another question:

What was He like within?

- What kind of heart did He possess?
- What moved Him?
- What grieved Him?
- What angered Him?
- What did He love?
- What did He hate?
- How did He respond to suffering?
- How did He treat the weak?
- How did He deal with sinners?
- How did He respond to rejection?

What happened within Him when He was mocked, misunderstood, betrayed, falsely accused, beaten, and crucified?

And perhaps the deepest question of all: **What was the source of the righteousness, holiness, love, and obedience that characterised His life?**

The Bible does not present Jesus merely as a man who performed extraordinary acts. It allows us to look into His heart. And when we do, we encounter a person whose greatness did not lie merely in what He could do, but in **who He was**.

2.1. Jesus Had a Distinct and Knowable Character

The Jesus of Scripture was not an abstract theological idea. He was a real person.

- He thought. He felt. He chose. He loved.
- He grieved. He rejoiced. He became angry.
- He experienced weariness. He felt compassion.
- He faced temptation. He suffered loneliness.
- He experienced rejection. He formed friendships.
- He wept. He prayed.
- He obeyed. He trusted.
- He submitted Himself completely to His Father.

The Gospel accounts therefore allow us to encounter not merely doctrines concerning Jesus but the personality of Jesus Himself.

He could be gentle:

- “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”— Matthew 11:28

He could also be uncompromising:

- “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”— Matthew 23:33

He could take children into His arms:

- “And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”— Mark 10:16

Yet He could drive merchants from the temple:

- “And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple...” — John 2:15

He could weep beside a grave:

- “Jesus wept.” — John 11:35

And He could stand before hostile rulers without fear.

- There was tenderness in Him without weakness.
- There was authority without arrogance.
- There was humility without inferiority.
- There was boldness without cruelty.
- There was compassion without compromise.
- There was holiness without coldness.

Jesus possessed a remarkable balance of qualities which human beings often struggle to hold together.

2.2. The Heart of Jesus Was Rooted in His Father

If we attempt to understand the inner life of Christ without examining His relationship with His Father, we will misunderstand Him. His Father was the centre of His life.

Jesus said:

❑ “I live by the Father..” — John 6:57

He declared:

❑ “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” — John 4:34

His deepest satisfaction was not wealth, recognition, influence, popularity, or personal comfort. It was to do His Father's will.

Again He said:

❑ “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” — John 5:30

This is one of the most revealing statements Jesus ever made about Himself.

At the centre of His personality was not self-seeking.

- It was submission.
- Not passive submission.
- Not fearful obedience.
- But willing, intelligent, loving obedience.

Jesus delighted in pleasing His Father. He said:

❑ “I do always those things that please him.” — John 8:29

That sentence opens a window into His heart. **“I do always those things that please him.”** What kind of person lives with such singleness of purpose? Most human beings live divided lives.

- We want to please God, but we also want to please ourselves.
- We desire righteousness, yet we are drawn toward selfishness.
- We desire truth, yet we sometimes fear its cost.
- We desire obedience, yet we negotiate with temptation.

Jesus was different. His will was deliberately aligned with His Father. This relationship shaped everything else about Him.

2.3. His Mind Was Governed by the Will of God

The “mind” of Christ deserves serious reflection. What kind of mind did He possess?

Paul wrote:

❑ “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”—Philippians 2:5

The verses that follow explain it:

❑ “Who... made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant...” —Philippians 2:6–7

And:

❑ “he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” —Philippians 2:8

The mind of Christ was therefore characterised by humility, service, obedience, and self-surrender. The natural human impulse is often toward self-preservation. Christ's mind moved toward self-giving.

- Human beings frequently ask: What will benefit me?
Christ asked: What is the will of my Father?
- Human beings frequently desire recognition.
Christ made Himself “of no reputation.”
- Human beings compete for position.
Christ washed His disciples' feet.
- Human beings often protect themselves from suffering.
Christ knowingly walked toward the cross.

His mind was fundamentally outward-looking. It was centred upon the Father and upon others. This was not occasional behaviour. It was the governing disposition of His life.

2.4. Jesus Was Meek and Lowly in Heart

Jesus gave humanity a rare direct description of His own heart:

☐ “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart...” — Matthew 11:29

Notice carefully. He did not merely say that He **behaved** meekly. He said He was: **“meek and lowly in heart.”** This was internal. It was part of His very disposition. Meekness in Scripture should not be confused with weakness. Jesus was not timid.

- He confronted religious corruption publicly.
- He challenged powerful leaders.
- He exposed hypocrisy.
- He refused to compromise truth.
- He endured opposition without surrendering His mission.

Yet beneath that strength was humility.

The person who possessed extraordinary authority did not use that authority to exalt Himself. When His disciples argued about greatness, Jesus placed before them a radically different principle:

☐ “whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:”
— Matthew 20:27

Then He pointed to Himself:

☐ “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister...”
— Matthew 20:28

Here lies one of the great paradoxes of Christ. **The highest became servant.** The One who could command became the One who served. The One whom angels honoured stooped to wash the feet of men.

2.5. Jesus Was Deeply Compassionate

One of the most frequently revealed emotions of Jesus is compassion.

Matthew records:

- “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them...” — Matthew 9:36

Again:

- “And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them...” — Matthew 14:14

Again:

- “Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude...” — Matthew 15:32

His compassion was not sentimental. It produced action.

- When He saw hunger, He fed.
- When He saw sickness, He healed.
- When He saw ignorance, He taught.
- When He saw grief, He comforted.
- When He saw spiritual confusion, He shepherded.
- When He saw sin, He called people to repentance.

This is important. Jesus did not love people by pretending their condition did not matter.

His compassion sought their restoration. He could forgive while saying:

- “go, and sin no more.” — John 8:11

His mercy did not remove truth. His truth did not remove mercy. In Him the two remained perfectly united.

2.6. Jesus Was Drawn Toward the Rejected

Another remarkable feature of His character was the kind of people who felt able to approach Him. Publicans. Sinners. The sick. The poor. Women who were socially despised. Lepers. Children. The demon-possessed. Foreigners. People carrying shame. People whom respectable society avoided. Religious leaders criticised Him because:

❑ “This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” — Luke 15:2

That criticism reveals something beautiful about Jesus. Sinners were not afraid to come near Him. Yet He was perfectly holy. How could absolute holiness make sinners feel welcome? Because His holiness was not self-righteousness. He did not delight in humiliating the fallen. He came to recover them.

He said:

❑ “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
— Luke 19:10

This may be one of the clearest windows into His heart. He looked at lost humanity not merely with condemnation, but with a desire to rescue.

❑ He Was Tender Toward Human Weakness

Jesus understood human frailty. Isaiah had prophetically described the servant of God:

❑ “A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench...”
— Isaiah 42:3

This tenderness appeared repeatedly in Christ. Peter denied Him. Yet Christ restored Peter. Thomas doubted. Christ gave Thomas evidence. The disciples repeatedly misunderstood Him. He continued teaching them. They fell asleep while He suffered in Gethsemane. He acknowledged:

❑ “the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” — Matthew 26:41

This is a remarkable statement. Even while experiencing personal agony, Jesus recognised the weakness of His disciples. He understood the difference between deliberate rebellion and human frailty. This does not mean He excused sin. It means He understood humanity. Hebrews later says:

❑ “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities...” — Hebrews 4:15

Jesus knew human weakness from within the human experience.

2.7. Jesus Wept

Two words reveal something profound about Him:

❑ “Jesus wept.” — John 11:35

The Son of God was not emotionally detached. He did not regard grief as weakness. He entered it. At Lazarus' grave, He saw the sorrow of Mary and those around her. The text says:

❑ “he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.” — John 11:33

Jesus knew that Lazarus would soon rise. Yet He still wept. Why? Because knowledge of future restoration did not make present suffering meaningless to Him. Human pain touched Him. The God revealed through Christ is therefore not represented as indifferent to human sorrow. Christ entered grief with those who grieved. Luke records another occasion:

❑ “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,”
— Luke 19:41

Here He wept not because of personal injury, but because Jerusalem was rejecting the path of peace. Jesus could grieve over people who were rejecting Him. That reveals an extraordinary heart.

❑ Jesus Could Be Angry

To understand Jesus correctly, we must not reduce Him to perpetual softness. He could become angry. Mark records:

❑ “And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts...” — Mark 3:5

Notice the combination. **Anger and grief.** His anger was not selfish irritation. It arose from hardness of heart and the damage caused by sin. His strongest words were often directed not toward obvious sinners but toward religious hypocrisy. He said:

❑ “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” — Matthew 23:13

Why such severity? Because hypocrisy corrupted people's understanding of God. It used religion while violating righteousness. It burdened others while protecting self. It appeared holy outwardly while remaining corrupt within. Jesus hated hypocrisy because He loved truth. His anger therefore belonged to His righteousness.

2.8. Jesus Loved Truth More Than Popularity

Jesus never adjusted truth simply to retain followers. John 6 provides a striking example. After teaching difficult truths, many of His disciples withdrew.

Scripture says:

❑ “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” — John 6:66

Jesus did not run after them and soften His message merely to retain numbers. Instead He turned to the twelve:

❑ “Will ye also go away?” — John 6:67

This reveals profound integrity. Christ desired people, but He did not manipulate them. He loved humanity, but He would not purchase popularity with falsehood. Truth mattered more than applause. His identity was not dependent upon public approval. This is one reason Jesus could remain steady while crowds changed.

One day people praised Him. Later people cried:

❑ “Crucify him, crucify him.” — Luke 23:21

His mission remained unchanged.

❑ Jesus Was Courageous

Jesus knew what awaited Him in Jerusalem. He spoke repeatedly of His coming suffering and death. Yet He continued forward. Luke records:

❑ “he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,” — Luke 9:51

That phrase deserves reflection. He did not walk toward the cross unknowingly. He moved toward it consciously. This was courage of the highest order. Courage is not the absence of awareness of suffering. It is faithfulness despite that awareness. Jesus knew betrayal awaited Him.

- He knew abandonment awaited Him.
- He knew humiliation awaited Him.
- He knew physical agony awaited Him.

Yet He continued. His courage was rooted in obedience.

2.9. Jesus Experienced Real Human Anguish

We should not misunderstand His courage as emotional invulnerability. In Gethsemane, Christ's distress was profound. He said:

☐ “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death...” — Matthew 26:38

Luke records:

☐ “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly...” — Luke 22:44

This is important. Jesus did not approach suffering as though pain were unreal. He experienced anguish. He prayed:

☐ “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me...” — Luke 22:42

But the prayer did not end there. It continued:

☐ “nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”

Here perhaps we see the heart of Christ more clearly than almost anywhere else. His humanity recoiled from the suffering before Him. Yet His loyalty to His Father remained supreme. The greatness of His obedience was not that the path was painless. It was that He obeyed while fully feeling its cost.

❖ His Obedience Was Tested

Hebrews contains a remarkable statement:

☐ “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;” — Hebrews 5:8

Jesus did not live in a protected environment where obedience cost nothing.

- His obedience was exercised under pressure.
- He obeyed when hungry.
- He obeyed when misunderstood.
- He obeyed when rejected.
- He obeyed when betrayed.
- He obeyed when suffering.
- He obeyed when death stood before Him.

Philippians summarises it:

☐ “he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” — Philippians 2:8

The character of Jesus was therefore demonstrated under the most severe conditions.

2.10. Jesus Was Tempted, Yet Without Sin

One of the most important questions concerning Christ is His relationship to sin. Hebrews declares:

□ “but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” — Hebrews 4:15

Temptation was real. Yet sin never conquered Him. At the beginning of His public ministry, the devil tempted Him directly. He was hungry. He was physically weak. He was offered power. He was challenged to prove Himself.

Yet His repeated response was:

□ “It is written...” — Matthew 4

Notice where His mind went under temptation.

- To Scripture.
- To His Father.
- To obedience.

He refused to use divine power selfishly. He refused to worship another for worldly dominion. He refused to test His Father presumptuously. Where temptation invited self-exaltation, Christ chose submission. Where temptation offered shortcuts, Christ remained faithful.

❖ Where Did His Righteousness Come From?

This question goes to the heart of our inquiry. Was Jesus righteous merely because He possessed extraordinary self-discipline? Did He manufacture holiness by sheer strength of will? Jesus' own testimony points us elsewhere. He repeatedly identified His Father as the source upon whom He depended. He said:

□ “The Son can do nothing of himself...” — John 5:19

Again:

□ “I can of mine own self do nothing...” — John 5:30

Again:

□ “the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” — John 14:10

These statements are extraordinary. Jesus did not present His earthly righteousness as independent self-sufficiency. His life was one of continual dependence upon His Father. He prayed frequently. He sought solitude with God. He lived by His Father's word. He sought His Father's will. He received His Father's works. His righteousness was manifested through perfect union, trust, obedience, and dependence upon His Father. He said: “I live by the Father...” — John 6:57 That sentence may help explain much about His inner life. Christ's earthly life was not centred in autonomous independence. It was a life lived from the Father.

2.11. His Holiness Was Not Isolation From Humanity

Jesus was holy. Yet He did not preserve holiness by separating Himself completely from sinners.

- He touched lepers.
- He ate with publicans.
- He spoke with socially despised people.
- He allowed a sinful woman to approach Him.
- He moved among broken humanity without becoming corrupted by its sin.

This is an important distinction. Human beings often imagine holiness as distance. Jesus revealed holiness as purity capable of entering darkness without becoming darkness. Instead of uncleanness passing from the leper to Him, healing passed from Him to the leper. Instead of sinners corrupting Him, His presence called sinners toward righteousness. His holiness was active. Restorative. Life-giving.

❖ Jesus Forgave His Enemies

Perhaps nowhere is the character of Christ more clearly revealed than at the cross. He had been falsely accused. Mocked. Beaten. Humiliated. Stripped. Crucified.

Yet He prayed:

□ [“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” — Luke 23:34](#)

This prayer is astonishing. The natural human response to injustice is retaliation. Christ responded with intercession. He did not deny the evil being committed. He asked mercy for those committing it. This was not weakness. It was the culmination of the principle He had already taught:

□ [“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you...” — Matthew 5:44](#)

Jesus did not merely preach love for enemies. He practised it while His enemies were killing Him. That distinction matters. Many people teach ideals they cannot embody under pressure. Jesus' teachings survived contact with suffering.

2.12. He Loved Even Those Who Failed Him

John introduces the final supper with these words:

☐ “having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” — John 13:1

Consider who those men were.

- One would betray Him.
- One would deny Him.
- Most would abandon Him.
- Yet He washed their feet.
- Jesus knew Judas' intention.
- Still He washed Judas' feet.

That act reveals something extraordinary. Christ's love was not dependent upon others being worthy of it. It arose from His own character. This is perhaps one of the deepest differences between ordinary human love and the love revealed in Christ. Human love often responds to value. Christ's love could create value in those who appeared undeserving.

❖ His Love Was Self-Sacrificial

Jesus defined love through His own impending death:

☐ “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” — John 15:13

Yet His death went beyond dying for loyal friends. Paul later wrote:

☐ “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” — Romans 5:8

Jesus' love therefore cannot be reduced to affection. It was sacrifice. He gave Himself. He said:

☐ “the Son of man came... to give his life a ransom for many.” — Matthew 20:28

This is the heart of Christ: **He gave.**

- His time.
- His strength.
- His teaching.
- His compassion.
- His service.
- And eventually His life.

2.13. Jesus Was Not Governed by Ego

The absence of selfish ambition in Christ is remarkable. When people attempted to make Him king by force, He withdrew.

□ “he departed again into a mountain himself alone.”— John 6:15

When people praised Him, He did not become intoxicated by applause. When people rejected Him, He did not abandon His mission. When challenged to demonstrate power merely to prove Himself, He refused. When mocked at the cross:

□ “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” — Matthew 27:40

He remained. Why? Because proving Himself was not His objective. Completing His Father's work was. A person governed by ego must constantly defend reputation. Christ could remain silent before false accusations. Isaiah had written:

□ “he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth...” —
Isaiah 53:7

There is enormous inner strength in a person who does not need to vindicate himself at every insult.

❖ Jesus Possessed Moral Consistency

Many great historical figures have taught admirable principles while living lives that contradicted some of those principles. With Jesus, the Gospel writers present remarkable consistency between teaching and life.

- He taught humility.
- He humbled Himself.
- He taught service.
- He served.
- He taught prayer.
- He prayed.
- He taught forgiveness.
- He forgave.
- He taught love for enemies.
- He loved enemies.
- He taught obedience to God.
- He obeyed.
- He taught self-denial.
- He denied Himself.
- He taught that a man should lay down his life.
- He laid down His own.

There was no visible contradiction between His message and His character. This is one reason His personality deserves comparison with every other influential figure in history. His authority did not come merely from eloquence. His life authenticated His words.

2.14. Even His Enemies Struggled to Find Moral Fault

Jesus once challenged His opponents:

❑ “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” — John 8:46

That is a remarkable challenge. He made it publicly. His enemies watched Him carefully. They sought accusations. Yet when He was finally condemned, false witnesses had to be sought. Pilate eventually said:

❑ “I find in him no fault at all.” — John 18:38

The thief crucified beside Him declared:

❑ “this man hath done nothing amiss.” — Luke 23:41

The centurion witnessing His death said:

❑ “Certainly this was a righteous man.” — Luke 23:47

The testimony of Scripture repeatedly draws attention to His innocence.

❖ What Did Jesus Characterize?

If the entire character of Jesus had to be reduced to several central qualities, Scripture points toward these:

- Love.
- Truth.
- Righteousness.
- Holiness.
- Humility.
- Obedience.
- Compassion.
- Self-sacrifice.
- Faithfulness.
- Dependence upon the Father.

But even this list remains incomplete. Because Jesus did not merely possess isolated virtues. They formed one integrated character. His love was truthful. His truth was loving. His humility possessed authority. His authority remained humble. His holiness was compassionate. His compassion remained holy. His courage remained gentle. His gentleness remained strong. His obedience was voluntary. His submission flowed from love. This harmony is one of the extraordinary features of His personality.

2.15. Jesus Revealed the Father's Character

The importance of Christ's character goes beyond personal admiration. Jesus said:

□ “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” — John 14:9

Therefore, every genuine glimpse into the heart of Christ becomes a glimpse into the character of God.

- When Jesus touched the untouchable, He revealed the Father's heart.
- When He forgave sinners, He revealed the Father.
- When He wept with the grieving, He revealed the Father.
- When He condemned hypocrisy, He revealed the Father's love of truth.
- When He received children, He revealed the Father.
- When He restored Peter, He revealed the Father.
- When He prayed for His executioners, He revealed the Father.
- When He laid down His life, He revealed the Father.

Paul expresses this truth:

□ “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself...” — 2 Corinthians 5:19

This makes the character of Jesus central to understanding God.

❖ The Astonishing Combination

When we stand back and examine the Jesus of the Gospels, an extraordinary picture appears.

- A man who possessed authority but did not dominate.
- A man of immense courage who could weep.
- A man of perfect holiness whom sinners wanted to approach.
- A man who exposed hypocrisy without becoming cynical.
- A man who was betrayed yet continued to love.
- A man who knew He had come from God yet washed human feet.
- A man who could command storms yet submitted Himself to His Father.
- A man who claimed extraordinary identity yet lived in extraordinary humility.
- A man whose enemies killed Him yet whose response was: “Father, forgive them.”

This raises the question that must eventually confront every serious reader:

What kind of person is this?

2.16. Why His Character Matters to the Question of Following Him

The question of whether humanity should follow Jesus cannot be answered merely by examining His power. Power alone does not make anyone worthy of trust. Nor can it be answered merely by His intelligence. Human history contains brilliant minds. Nor by popularity. Many people have attracted followers. Nor even by miracles alone.

The deeper question is: **Is His character worthy of trust?**

- Could we entrust ourselves to someone like Him?
- Could we trust a person whose life was governed by truth?
- Could we trust One who did not use power selfishly?
- Could we trust One who loved the undeserving?
- Could we trust One who forgave His enemies?
- Could we trust One whose words and life agreed?
- Could we trust One whose deepest desire was to do the will of His Father?
- Could we trust One willing to die for those He came to save?

If the Gospel portrait is true, then humanity is not merely confronting an extraordinary mind. It is confronting an extraordinary character. And perhaps that is one reason people continue to be drawn to Jesus Christ. Not merely because of what He promised. Not merely because of what He performed. But because of the kind of person He revealed Himself to be.

Yet another question now becomes unavoidable. History contains many admirable people. There have been courageous reformers, compassionate teachers, brilliant philosophers, sacrificial leaders, and deeply religious men. So even after recognising the extraordinary beauty of Christ's character, we must still ask: **Was Jesus merely the finest example among many great human beings?** Or was there something about Him that placed Him in a category altogether different?

- Why did He make claims that other moral teachers did not make?
- Why did He claim authority to forgive sins?
- Why did He accept worship?
- Why did He say that eternal life depended upon believing in Him?
- Why did He identify Himself as the resurrection and the life?
- Why did He claim existence before Abraham?
- Why did His followers proclaim Him not merely as teacher, but as Lord?

These questions lead us naturally into the next chapter: **WHAT MAKES JESUS CHRIST UNIQUE AMONG ALL WHO HAVE EVER LIVED?** Why He Cannot Be Reduced to Merely Another Great Teacher, Prophet, Philosopher, or Religious Leader

Chapter 3

WHAT MAKES JESUS CHRIST UNIQUE AMONG ALL WHO HAVE EVER LIVED?

*Why He Cannot Be Reduced to Merely Another Great
Teacher, Prophet, Philosopher,
or Religious Leader*

3.0 Was Jesus simply a great man with extraordinary teaching? Or did He belong to an entirely different category?

Human history has produced extraordinary men and women. Some changed the course of philosophy. Some shaped religion. Some influenced law, politics, education, culture, science, ethics, and civilisation. Some left teachings that continue to guide millions of people centuries after their deaths.

- There have been philosophers whose ideas transformed human thought.
- There have been prophets whose words shaped nations.
- There have been religious teachers who founded movements followed across continents.
- There have been reformers who challenged injustice.
- There have been rulers whose empires altered history.
- There have been moral teachers whose sayings are still studied today.

Jesus Christ lived within this same human history. Yet the claim of Scripture is that He cannot ultimately be placed alongside these figures as merely one more influential teacher among many.

His uniqueness does not rest merely upon the fact that He had many followers. Nor merely upon the beauty of His moral teachings. Nor upon the miracles attributed to Him. Nor upon the historical influence of Christianity.

The deeper distinction lies in;

- who He claimed to be,
- what He claimed to possess,
- what He claimed authority to do, and
- what Scripture declares concerning Him.

The question therefore becomes: **Was Jesus simply a great man with extraordinary teaching?** Or did He belong to an entirely different category?

3.1. Great Teachers of History Point Beyond Themselves

The great teachers of history generally directed their followers toward principles, wisdom, laws, disciplines, or truths that they believed existed beyond themselves.

- A philosopher may say: Seek wisdom.
- A moral teacher may say: Practise virtue.
- A prophet may say: Hear the word of God.
- A religious reformer may say: Return to righteousness.
- A teacher may explain a path.

But Jesus repeatedly placed Himself at the very centre of His message.

He did not merely say: **I will show you the way.**

He said:

☐ [“I am the way...” — John 14:6](#)

He did not merely say: **I will teach you truth.**

He said:

☐ [“I am... the truth...” — John 14:6](#)

He did not merely say: **I will tell you how to obtain life.**

He said:

☐ [“I am... the life...” — John 14:6](#)

This distinction is profound. Jesus did not merely present a system. He presented Himself. He did not point to other men of renown, He pointed to Himself. Christianity, at its biblical centre, is therefore not merely adherence to the ethical teachings of Jesus. It is a personal relationship with Jesus Himself.

3.2. He Did Not Merely Teach Life He Claimed to Be Life

Jesus repeatedly identified Himself with realities that other historical teachers ordinarily point toward.

He said:

❑ “I am the bread of life...” — John 6:35

Again:

❑ “I am the light of the world...” — John 8:12

Again:

❑ “I am the door...” — John 10:9

Again:

❑ “I am the good shepherd...” — John 10:11

Again:

❑ “I am the resurrection, and the life...” — John 11:25

Again:

❑ “I am the true vine...” — John 15:1

These declarations are unlike ordinary philosophical teaching.

Jesus did not merely offer bread. He called Himself the bread. He did not merely point toward light. He called Himself the light. He did not merely preach resurrection. He claimed to be the resurrection. This means that the solution Jesus presented to humanity was inseparable from His own person.

❖ He Claimed an Exclusive Relationship to the Father

Jesus made claims about His relationship with God that require serious consideration.

He said:

“no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” — John 14:6

Again:

“he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...” — John 14:9

Again:

“I and my Father are one.” — John 10:30

Again:

“the Father is in me, and I in him.” — John 10:38

Again:

“I came forth from the Father...” — John 16:28

Jesus did not present Himself merely as one messenger among many carrying information from God. He placed Himself uniquely between humanity and the Father. To see Him was to see the Father revealed. To receive Him was to receive the One who sent Him. To reject Him was to reject the Father who sent Him. He said: “He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.” — John 5:23. This is an extraordinary claim.

3.3. He Claimed Existence Before His Human Birth at Bethlehem

Every ordinary human teacher begins life at birth. Jesus spoke differently.

He said:

❑ “Before Abraham was, I am.” — John 8:58

Abraham had lived many centuries earlier. Yet Jesus declared an existence that preceded Abraham.

He also prayed:

❑ “O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” — John 17:5

He was not merely claiming existence before Abraham. He spoke of glory with the Father **before the world existed**.

And He said:

❑ “I came down from heaven...” — John 6:38

This separates His own account of Himself from that of ordinary human beings. He described His earthly life as an entrance into the world from a prior existence.

❖ He Claimed Authority to Forgive Sin

One of the most striking moments in the Gospels occurred when a paralysed man was brought to Jesus. Instead of immediately healing him, Jesus said:

❑ “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” — Mark 2:5

The scribes immediately recognised the significance:

❑ “Who can forgive sins but God only?” — Mark 2:7

That objection is important. If one person sins against another, the offended person may forgive the offence. But Jesus pronounced forgiveness of sin with a broader authority. He then healed the man to demonstrate:

❑ “that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins...” — Mark 2:10

Jesus therefore did not merely preach that God forgives. He personally pronounced forgiveness.

3.4. He Accepted Worship

Throughout Scripture, faithful servants of God refuse worship that belongs to God.

When Cornelius fell at Peter's feet:

❑ “Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.” — Acts 10:26

When John attempted to worship an angel, the angel replied:

❑ “See thou do it not...” — Revelation 22:9

Yet Jesus received worship.

After He walked upon the sea:

❑ “they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.” — Matthew 14:33

After His resurrection:

❑ “they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.” — Matthew 28:9

Thomas addressed Him:

❑ “My Lord and my God.” — John 20:28

Jesus did not rebuke Thomas. Instead He said:

❑ “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed...” — John 20:29

This must form part of any serious investigation into His identity.

❖ He Claimed Authority Over the Sabbath

The Sabbath belonged to the order established by God.

Yet Jesus declared:

❑ “For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.” — Matthew 12:8

This is another extraordinary statement. He did not merely interpret the Sabbath. He claimed lordship over it. Again and again, Jesus spoke with an authority that surpassed the role of an ordinary teacher.

3.5. He Spoke With Authority Over Nature, Over deceases, and over death

Jesus' miracles themselves reveal something unusual. He did not always pray for power to be exercised from elsewhere. At times He simply commanded.

To the sea:

☐ “Peace, be still.” — Mark 4:39. And the wind ceased.

To the dead:

☐ “Lazarus, come forth.” — John 11:43. And Lazarus came forth.

To the paralysed:

☐ “Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.” — Matthew 9:6. And the man arose.

To leprosy:

☐ “I will; be thou clean.” — Matthew 8:3. And the leprosy departed.

The disciples themselves asked:

☐ “What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!” — Matthew 8:27

That question belongs at the heart of this chapter. **What manner of man is this?**

❖ He Exercised Authority Over Death

Throughout history, great individuals have died. Their followers visit their graves. Their teachings survive them. Their influence may continue. But death eventually silences every ordinary human life. Jesus confronted death differently.

Before raising Lazarus He said:

☐ “I am the resurrection, and the life...” — John 11:25. Then He called a man who had been dead four days from the tomb.

But His greatest claim was concerning His own death. He said:

☐ “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” — John 2:19

John explains:

☐ “But he spake of the temple of his body.” — John 2:21

Again Jesus said:

☐ “I lay down my life, that I might take it again.” — John 10:17

And:

☐ “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” — John 10:18

This is unlike the claim of an ordinary martyr. A martyr may willingly die. Jesus claimed authority concerning both His death and resurrection.

3.6. His Tomb Was Not Intended to Become His Final Memorial

Great historical figures often become permanently associated with their burial places. Their tombs become monuments. Jesus' followers instead proclaimed an empty tomb.

The angel's words were:

❑ [“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.” — Matthew 28:6](#)

This creates a profound distinction. The central Christian proclamation is not:

Here lies our teacher.

It is:

He is risen.

Christianity therefore asks humanity to relate not merely to the memory of Christ but to Christ Himself as living.

❖ His Followers Claimed to Have Seen Him Alive After Death

The Christian proclamation did not arise merely from admiration for the memory of a dead teacher. It arose from the claim that He rose from the dead.

Paul writes:

❑ [“that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:” — 1 Corinthians 15:4](#)

He continues by describing appearances to Peter, the twelve, and many others. The resurrection therefore stands at the centre of the Christian claim about Jesus. If He remained permanently in the grave, He might still be remembered as a remarkable teacher. But the apostolic message was that death did not retain Him.

Peter declared:

❑ [“Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death...” — Acts 2:24](#)

Christian hope therefore rests not merely upon the teachings of a dead founder but upon the claim of a living Christ.

3.7. He Claimed He Would Remain With His Followers and would give them eternal life

Before His ascension Jesus said:

❑ “lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” — Matthew 28:20

How could a man preparing to leave physically promise continual presence with believers across generations and nations? This statement again presses us toward the question of His identity. Jesus' influence was not presented merely as the survival of His ideas. He promised His own continuing presence.

❖ He Claimed to Give Eternal Life

Religious teachers may describe eternal life. Jesus said He gives it. Speaking of His sheep, He declared:

❑ “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish...”
— John 10:28

This is an astonishing claim. What ordinary human being can say: **I give eternal life?**

He also said:

❑ “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”
— John 6:47

The object of faith is again His own person.

❖ He Made Humanity's Eternal Destiny Connected With Its Response to Him

Jesus' claims become even more remarkable when He connects humanity's destiny with its response to Him.

He said:

❑ “...whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
— John 3:16

And:

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life...”
— John 3:36

Jesus therefore cannot easily be reduced to a teacher whose moral principles may be accepted while His identity is ignored. His teaching continually directs the hearer back to Him.

3.8. He Claimed He Would Judge Humanity

Jesus also spoke of a future judgment in which He Himself would exercise authority.

He said:

- ❑ “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:” — John 5:22

Again:

- ❑ “the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,” — John 5:28

And:

- ❑ “And shall come forth...” — John 5:29

The same Jesus who once stood before Pilate as an accused prisoner declared that ultimately humanity would stand before Him. That reversal is extraordinary.

❖ He Claimed He Would Return

Jesus' story, according to Scripture, does not end with His departure from earth. He promised:

- ❑ “I will come again...” — John 14:3

At His ascension the disciples were told:

- ❑ “this same Jesus... shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” — Acts 1:11

Christianity therefore looks not merely backward toward the life of Jesus but forward toward His return. No ordinary historical figure occupies this place in the biblical narrative.

3.9. His Teaching Possessed an Unusual Personal Authority

When the officers sent to arrest Jesus returned without Him, they explained:

❑ “Never man spake like this man.” — John 7:46

Notice what struck them. Not merely **what** He said. But the manner in which He spoke. Jesus frequently used the expression:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you...”

And in the Sermon on the Mount He repeatedly contrasted traditional interpretation with His own authority:

“But I say unto you...”

He did not speak tentatively. He spoke as one possessing authority. Matthew records:

❑ “the people were astonished at his doctrine:” — Matthew 7:28

Why?

❑ “For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”
— Matthew 7:29

❖ His Moral Teaching Reached the Heart

Jesus did not merely regulate outward behaviour. He traced sin into human thought and motive. Murder was not merely the physical act. Hatred mattered. Adultery was not merely the external act. Lust mattered. Religious charity performed for human praise was spiritually defective. Prayer performed for display was defective. Outward righteousness without inward transformation was inadequate.

He said:

❑ “Blessed are the pure in heart...” — Matthew 5:8

And:

❑ “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”
— Matthew 12:34

Jesus therefore located morality at the level of character. He was not satisfied with outward conformity. He sought inward transformation.

3.10. He Summarized Righteousness in Love

When asked concerning the great commandment, Jesus answered:

- ❑ “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” — Matthew 22:37

Then:

- ❑ “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” — Matthew 22:39

And declared:

- ❑ “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”
— Matthew 22:40

His ethic was therefore not merely a collection of regulations. It was rooted in love toward God and love toward others. Yet Jesus did not merely define this love. He embodied it.

❖ He Loved His Enemies in Practice

Many moral teachings praise kindness. Jesus went further:

- ❑ “Love your enemies...” — Matthew 5:44

This teaching by itself is extraordinary. But its power lies in the fact that Jesus eventually demonstrated it. While crucified, He prayed:

- ❑ “Father, forgive them...” — Luke 23:34

His teaching survived its greatest test. He practised toward His enemies what He had commanded His followers to practise.

❖ There Was Remarkable Unity Between His Words and His Life

This deserves emphasis. Many influential people possess a gap between teaching and practice. Jesus' Gospel portrait shows a remarkable correspondence.

- He taught humility — He humbled Himself.
- He taught service — He served.
- He taught forgiveness — He forgave.
- He taught love — He loved.
- He taught sacrifice — He sacrificed Himself.
- He taught obedience to God — He obeyed His Father unto death.

His life became the demonstration of His teaching.

3.11. He Claimed Moral Sinlessness

Jesus made a challenge difficult to imagine from any ordinary person:

❑ “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” — John 8:46

He was surrounded by hostile critics who watched Him closely. Yet the Gospel record repeatedly presents His innocence. Peter later called Him:

❑ “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:” — 1 Peter 2:22

John wrote:

❑ “in him is no sin.” — 1 John 3:5

Hebrews declares:

❑ “yet without sin.” — Hebrews 4:15

The New Testament does not present Jesus merely as morally excellent. It presents Him as sinless.

❖ He Was Extraordinary Without Seeking Earthly Greatness

Jesus possessed extraordinary power yet lived without the normal symbols of greatness.

- He did not build a palace.
- He did not command an army.
- He accumulated no recorded fortune.
- He pursued no political office.
- He wrote no surviving book by His own hand.
- He established no earthly dynasty.

When people tried to make Him king:

❑ “he departed again into a mountain himself alone.” — John 6:15

By conventional standards of worldly ambition, His life appears remarkably detached from power. Yet His influence outlived kings and empires. This itself deserves reflection.

❖ His Kingdom Was Not Built by Military Force

Jesus told Pilate:

❑ “My kingdom is not of this world...” — John 18:36

He continued:

“if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight...”

His kingdom was therefore not to be established by ordinary political conquest. When Peter used a sword during Jesus' arrest, Christ told him:

❑ “Put up again thy sword into his place...” — Matthew 26:52

Jesus would conquer in a fundamentally different manner. Through truth. Through love. Through sacrifice. Through transformation of human hearts.

3.12. His Greatness Was Defined by Service

Human greatness commonly rises upward. Jesus defined greatness downward.

He said:

- ❑ “whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;”
— Matthew 20:26

And He presented Himself as the example:

- ❑ “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister...” — Matthew 20:28

The King served. The Master washed feet. The Lord gave Himself. Jesus reversed ordinary human ideas of greatness.

❖ He Did Not Merely Ask His Followers to Believe His Teaching — He Asked Them to Follow Him

Jesus' invitation was personal:

- ❑ “Follow me.” — Matthew 4:19

He did not simply say:

- Memorise my philosophy.
- Adopt my ethical system.
- Study my sayings.

He called people into discipleship.

Following Jesus required personal allegiance.

He said:

- ❑ “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” — Matthew 16:24

This was not casual admiration. It was surrender.

3.13. Jesus Cannot Be Reduced to “A human moral Teacher”

Some of Jesus' statements become startling when considered seriously.

He said:

❑ “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me...”
— Matthew 10:37

What ordinary teacher could rightly demand such loyalty? If Jesus were merely a human moral teacher, such claims would appear excessive. But if His identity is what Scripture declares, then His demand becomes understandable. This is why His identity cannot be separated from His teaching.

❖ Jesus Cannot Easily Be Reduced to “A Good Teacher”

There is a temptation to honour Jesus while avoiding His claims. One may call Him wise. Compassionate. Inspirational. A great moral teacher. But the Jesus of Scripture does not leave that category undisturbed.

A merely good teacher ordinarily does not claim:

- That He existed before Abraham.
- That He came from heaven.
- That He possessed glory with the Father before the world existed.
- That seeing Him is seeing the Father.
- That He can forgive sins.
- That He gives eternal life.
- That He will raise the dead.
- That He will judge humanity.
- That no one comes to the Father except through Him.
- That He will return from heaven.

These claims force a decision about identity.

One cannot adequately explain Jesus merely by praising His ethics while ignoring what He said about Himself.

3.14. How Then Should We Compare Jesus With Other Great Figures?

The comparison must be fair. It should not require insulting or caricaturing other historical figures. Their teachings and historical roles should be represented accurately. But the central question is categorical.

- Did Socrates claim to be the resurrection and the life?
- Did Confucius claim to have descended from heaven?
- Did philosophers claim authority to forgive humanity's sins?
- Did prophets ordinarily place faith in themselves as the basis of eternal life?
- Did religious teachers claim to have possessed glory with God before the creation of the world?
- Did reformers claim that all humanity would ultimately hear their voice and rise from the grave?
- Did popes claim they would resurrect from the dead once they died?

The uniqueness of Christ therefore lies not merely in degree. It lies in kind.

❖ **Jesus Is Either Far More Than an Ordinary Teacher, or His Claims Must Be Rejected**

This is where the investigation becomes intellectually serious. The Gospel Jesus cannot comfortably remain merely: **a good man among good men.**

- His claims are too large.
- His self-understanding is too extraordinary.
- His relationship with the Father is too central.
- His authority is too extensive.
- His promises are too absolute.
- His demand upon humanity is too personal.

If His claims are false, then humanity must confront that conclusion honestly. But if His claims are true, then no historical comparison can leave Him standing as merely one religious teacher among many.

He occupies another category altogether.

3.15. The Cross Makes His Uniqueness Even More Difficult to Explain by Ordinary Ambition

If Jesus sought merely personal power, the cross makes little sense. He repeatedly knew that His path would lead to death. Yet He continued.

He said:

☐ “I lay down my life for the sheep.” — John 10:15

Again:

☐ “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.” — John 10:18

His death was presented not merely as something done to Him. It was something He willingly entered. Why? This question leads beyond His identity and character toward His mission. Why did He believe humanity needed His death? Why did He describe His life as a ransom?

Why did John call Him:

“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”? — John 1:29

The uniqueness of Jesus cannot be understood without Calvary.

❖ Yet His Uniqueness Is Not Merely in His Claims

Anyone can make extraordinary claims. Claims alone prove nothing. The significance of Jesus lies in the convergence of several things:

- His claims.
- His character.
- His works.
- His teaching.
- His life.
- His fulfilment of His mission.
- His death.
- His resurrection.
- And the transformation claimed by those who encountered Him.

A person making immense claims while displaying selfishness, corruption, dishonesty, or cruelty would have little credibility. But in Jesus we encounter extraordinary claims alongside extraordinary moral character.

- The same One who claimed unique authority also washed feet.
- The same One who said He came from heaven lived humbly.
- The same One who claimed to give eternal life willingly laid down His own life.
- The same One who claimed lordship refused political ambition.

His claims and character must therefore be considered together.

3.16. The Resurrection Changes the Entire Question

Suppose Jesus had taught magnificently, lived morally, died courageously, and remained dead. He could still occupy an honoured place among the great figures of history. But Scripture does not permit the story to end there. It declares:

□ “He is risen.” — Matthew 28:6

Paul recognised the decisive importance of this claim:

□ “And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” — 1 Corinthians 15:14

Christianity therefore places an extraordinary burden upon the resurrection. It does not merely say that Jesus' ideas lived on. It says **Jesus lived again**. If this claim is true, then death itself becomes evidence that Jesus cannot be assessed merely like every other historical figure.

❖ Humanity Does Not Merely Remember Jesus — It Continues to Hope in Him

Human beings may honour great historical figures. They may study them. Quote them. Build monuments to them. Follow their philosophies. But Christian faith does something more.

- It prays to God through Jesus.
- Trusts Him for forgiveness.
- Looks to Him for salvation.
- Believes He intercedes.
- Waits for His return.
- Expects resurrection through Him.
- And anchors hope of eternal life in Him.

That is a vastly greater role than historical influence. The real question is therefore not: **Why is Jesus famous?** Many people are famous. The question is: **Why has He become the object of such extraordinary hope?**

The biblical answer lies ultimately in who He is and what He has done.

3.17. The Most Important Difference

If we reduce everything in this chapter to one central distinction, it may be expressed this way:

Other great historical figures may point humanity toward ideas, truth, virtue, enlightenment, law, reform, or God. Jesus Christ ultimately points humanity to Himself because He claims that what humanity needs is found in Him.

He says:

- “Come unto me...” — Matthew 11:28
- “Follow me.” — Matthew 4:19
- “Believe also in me.” — John 14:1
- “Abide in me...” — John 15:4
- “he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” — John 6:47

Everything returns to the person.

- **Come to Me.**
- **Follow Me.**
- **Believe in Me.**
- **Abide in Me.**

This is perhaps the deepest distinction of all.

3.18. The Question We Can No Longer Avoid

After examining Jesus' claims, the comfortable distance of historical study begins to disappear.

- If He were merely a philosopher, we could evaluate His philosophy.
- If merely a teacher, we could select useful teachings.
- If merely a reformer, we could admire His courage.
- If merely a prophet, we could examine His message.

But Jesus asks for something much greater.

- He asks humanity to come to Him.
- To believe in Him.
- To follow Him.
- To abide in Him.
- To entrust eternal life to Him.

Therefore the question returns with greater force: WHO IS JESUS CHRIST, THAT HUMANITY SHOULD FOLLOW HIM AT ALL? If He is merely one remarkable human being among many, His demands appear excessive. But if He truly is the Son of the living God who came from the Father, revealed the Father, lived without sin, gave Himself for humanity, conquered death, returned to the Father, and will come again, then following Him becomes something entirely different.

It becomes not merely admiration of a historical figure. It becomes humanity's response to the One through whom God has approached humanity. Yet one enormous question remains. **Why did He come at all?** Why would the One who possessed glory with the Father enter a world that would reject Him?

- Why become flesh?
- Why hunger?
- Why suffer?
- Why allow Himself to be hated?
- Why go to the cross?
- Why die?
- What problem was so serious that His coming became necessary?
- What was He accomplishing through His life and death?

And why did He say:

□ **"For this cause came I unto this hour." — John 12:27**

To understand the uniqueness of Jesus fully, we must understand His mission. That brings us to the next chapter: **WHY DID JESUS CHRIST COME INTO THE WORLD, AND WHY DID HE LEAVE?**

Chapter 4

WHY DID JESUS CHRIST COME INTO THE WORLD, AND WHY DID HE LEAVE?

*The Purpose of His Coming, His Death, His
Resurrection, and His Continuing Work*

4.0 Why did He come here?

If Jesus Christ existed before Bethlehem, possessed glory with the Father before the world was, participated in creation, and came forth from the Father, then one question becomes unavoidable: **Why did He come here?**

- Why would the Son of God leave heavenly glory and enter a world of suffering?
- Why become human?
- Why live among people who would misunderstand Him?
- Why subject Himself to hunger, weariness, rejection, betrayal, sorrow, pain, and death?
- Why come to a world that would eventually crucify Him?
- And after rising from the dead, why did He leave again?

These questions take us beyond the identity of Christ into the very purpose of His mission.

Jesus did not come accidentally.

- He repeatedly spoke as One who had been sent.
- He knew why He had come.
- He knew what He was to accomplish.
- He knew that His mission would culminate in death.
- And He knew that after completing that work, He would return to His Father.

His life therefore cannot be understood merely as the story of a remarkable man.

It was a mission.

4.1. Jesus Was Sent

The language of Scripture is unmistakable. Jesus repeatedly said that the Father sent Him.

He said:

☐ “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” — John 4:34

Again:

☐ “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” — John 5:30

Again:

☐ “the Father himself, which hath sent me...” — John 5:37

Again:

☐ “I am not come of myself, but he sent me.” — John 8:42

Again:

☐ “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” — John 20:21

Jesus therefore understood His earthly life as a commission from His Eternal Father. He was here because the Father sent Him. This immediately tells us something important: His mission originated in God. The Gospel was not humanity searching for God. It was God reaching toward humanity.

❖ He Came Because God Loved the World

Perhaps the clearest statement is also the most familiar:

☐ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...” — John 3:16

Christ's coming begins in the love of God. The Father gave. The Son came. The world was the object of that love. This means the mission of Christ was not born merely out of judgment. It arose from love.

The purpose was:

☐ “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” — John 3:16

John continues:

☐ “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” — John 3:17

The purpose of Christ's coming was therefore redemptive. Humanity was in danger of perishing. God sent His Son to save.

4.2. Humanity Had a Problem It Could Not Solve for Itself

If humanity needed only better information, God might have sent merely a teacher. If humanity needed only moral instruction, another prophet might have been sufficient. If humanity needed only political reform, a ruler might have been raised. But Scripture presents the human problem as deeper than ignorance or social disorder.

The problem is sin.

Paul writes:

❑ “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” — Romans 3:23

And:

❑ “For the wages of sin is death...” — Romans 6:23

Sin separated humanity from God. Isaiah had written:

❑ “your iniquities have separated between you and your God...” — Isaiah 59:2

Humanity's problem was therefore not merely external. It was internal.

- Sin affected the heart.
- The will.
- The desires.
- The relationship with God.
- The final consequence was death.

This explains why Christ's mission had to reach deeper than moral instruction. Humanity did not merely need to be taught. It needed to be reconciled.

4.3. Jesus Came to Save the Lost

Jesus stated His mission plainly:

- “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
— Luke 19:10

The word “lost” is significant. It implies separation. Danger. Disorientation. Alienation.

Jesus did not come merely to admire humanity. He came to recover it. He told parables about lost sheep, lost coins, and lost sons. In each case, something valuable had become separated from where it belonged. Christ's mission was restorative. He came to bring humanity back to God.

❖ He Came to Call Sinners to Repentance

Jesus said:

- “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”
— Luke 5:32

His compassion therefore did not consist of leaving people unchanged. He loved sinners enough to call them away from sin.

He said:

- “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”
— Luke 13:3

Christ's mission was therefore both merciful and morally serious. He did not minimise sin. He came to overcome it.

4.4. He Came to Reveal the Father

Another major purpose of Christ's coming was revelation. Humanity's understanding of God had become distorted. Jesus came to make the Father known.

He said:

“he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...” — John 14:9

John writes:

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son... he hath declared him.” — John 1:18

Jesus therefore came not merely to tell humanity that God exists. He came to show humanity what God is like.

- His compassion revealed the Father.
- His forgiveness revealed the Father.
- His holiness revealed the Father.
- His patience revealed the Father.
- His hatred of hypocrisy revealed the Father.
- His love for sinners revealed the Father.
- His willingness to die revealed the Father.

This is central. The mission of Christ was not only to rescue humanity from sin. It was also to restore humanity's knowledge of God.

❖ He Came to Bear Witness to the Truth

Before Pilate, Jesus gave another reason for His coming:

□ “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” — John 18:37

Truth was central to His mission.

- He exposed falsehood.
- He corrected distorted religion.
- He revealed the truth about God.
- The truth about sin.
- The truth about righteousness.
- The truth about eternal life.
- The truth about humanity.
- The truth about Himself.

Jesus did not come merely to comfort. He came to reveal reality.

4.5. He Came to Destroy the Works of the Devil

John writes:

- “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” — 1 John 3:8

This expands the mission of Christ beyond individual forgiveness. There is a great controversy in Scripture between truth and deception, righteousness and sin, life and death. Christ entered that conflict. Satan had introduced deception, rebellion, temptation, and death. Christ came to undo that work. Where Satan tempted humanity into disobedience, Christ obeyed. Where sin produced death, Christ brought life. Where deception obscured God's character, Christ revealed the Father. Where humanity had fallen, Christ overcame.

❖ He Came as the Second Adam

Paul draws a profound contrast between Adam and Christ.

- “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” — 1 Corinthians 15:22

And:

- “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” — 1 Corinthians 15:45

Adam represents the beginning of fallen humanity. Christ represents a new beginning. Where Adam disobeyed, Christ obeyed. Where Adam yielded to temptation, Christ overcame temptation. Where Adam brought death into human experience, Christ brought the promise of life.

Romans expresses this contrast:

- “For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” — Romans 5:19

Christ's earthly life was therefore not incidental.

- His obedience mattered.
- His righteousness mattered.
- His victory mattered.

He came to succeed where humanity had failed.

4.6. He Came in Human Flesh

John writes:

❑ “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” — John 1:14

This was necessary to His mission. He did not rescue humanity from a distance. He entered the human condition. He experienced;

- hunger.
- Thirst.
- Weariness.
- Sorrow.
- Temptation.
- Pain.
- Rejection.
- Death.

Hebrews says:

❑ “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same...” — Hebrews 2:14

Why? The verse continues:

“that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;”

His humanity was therefore connected directly to His saving work. He became partaker of flesh and blood because He intended to enter death itself and conquer it.

❖ He Came to Give His Life

Jesus repeatedly connected His mission to His death. He said:

❑ “the Son of man came... to give his life a ransom for many.” — Matthew 20:28

This is one of the clearest statements of purpose in the Gospels. He came **to give His life**. His death was not merely the tragic ending of a failed ministry. It was central to the mission. He knew it was coming. He predicted it. He willingly entered it.

He said:

❑ “I lay down my life for the sheep.” — John 10:15

Again:

❑ “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.” — John 10:18

Human authorities crucified Him. But at the deeper level, Christ voluntarily gave Himself.

4.7. Why Did He Have to Die?

This question must not be treated lightly. Why death? Why could God not simply announce forgiveness and leave matters there? Scripture connects sin and death.

❑ “the wages of sin is death...” — Romans 6:23

And:

❑ “without shedding of blood is no remission.” — Hebrews 9:22

The sacrificial system of the Old Testament pointed toward the seriousness of sin and the necessity of substitution. John the Baptist identified Jesus as:

❑ “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” — John 1:29

Peter later wrote:

❑ “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree...”
— 1 Peter 2:24

Isaiah had foretold:

❑ “he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...” — Isaiah 53:5

The cross therefore stands at the centre of reconciliation. Christ bore what humanity could not remove from itself.

❖ God Was in Christ Reconciling the World

Paul gives one of the deepest explanations of Christ's mission:

❑ “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them...” — 2 Corinthians 5:19

Notice the direction. God was reconciling the world **unto Himself**. This was not the Son trying to persuade an unwilling Father to love humanity. The mission originated in God's love. The Father sent. The Son came. God was in Christ accomplishing reconciliation. This is crucial to understanding the Gospel. Calvary reveals not a conflict between Father and Son, but their united purpose to save.

4.8. The Cross Revealed Both Justice and Mercy

Sin could not simply be treated as meaningless. If evil has no consequence, justice becomes empty. Yet if sinners receive only what sin deserves, humanity perishes. At the cross, Scripture presents mercy and justice meeting. Paul writes that God might be:

□ “just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”
— Romans 3:26

God remains just. Yet He also justifies. The cross therefore reveals the seriousness of sin and the greatness of divine love at the same time. If sin were trivial, the cross would be unnecessary. If humanity were unloved, the cross would never have occurred. Calvary tells us both: **sin is terrible, and humanity is deeply loved.**

❖ The Cross Revealed the Character of Christ

The cross did not create Christ's love. It revealed it. Jesus had already lived a life of self-giving. At Calvary that character reached its fullest expression.

- He forgave His executioners.
- He cared for His mother.
- He spoke hope to the dying thief.
- He endured ridicule.
- He refused to save Himself at the expense of His mission.

The mockers said:

□ “He saved others; himself he cannot save.” — Matthew 27:42

Ironically, in one sense, they expressed the logic of His sacrifice. To save others, He refused to come down. His apparent weakness was the expression of His self-surrender.

4.9. “It Is Finished”

But the Story Could Not End at the Cross

Near the end of His suffering, Jesus declared:

□ “It is finished...” — John 19:30

This was not merely the exhaustion of a dying man. It was the declaration of completed work. He had accomplished what the Father sent Him to do. His earthly mission had reached its climax.

He had revealed the Father.

- Obeyed perfectly.
- Faced temptation.
- Taught truth.
- Loved humanity.
- Exposed sin.
- Borne suffering.
- Given His life.

The work appointed to Him had been completed.

❖ But the Story Could Not End at the Cross

If Jesus died and remained dead, death would still have the final word. But Scripture declares that He rose.

□ “He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.”
— Matthew 28:6

The resurrection was essential. Paul says:

□ “if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”
— 1 Corinthians 15:17

Christian faith therefore does not rest merely on the nobility of Christ's death. It rests on His victory over death.

4.10. The Resurrection Defeated Death

Death is humanity's great enemy. Every civilisation confronts it. Every philosophy must eventually answer it. Every human achievement ends beneath its shadow. Jesus entered death and emerged from it.

Paul writes:

❑ “Death is swallowed up in victory.” — 1 Corinthians 15:54

And:

❑ “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” — 1 Corinthians 15:55

The Christian hope is therefore not merely improved life before death. It is victory over death itself.

❖ His Resurrection Became the Foundation of Human Hope

Peter writes that God:

❑ “hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” — 1 Peter 1:3

Because Christ lives, hope extends beyond the grave. Jesus had said:

❑ “because I live, ye shall live also.” — John 14:19

This is one of the greatest reasons humanity has continued to anchor hope in Him. He did not merely teach people how to die well. He promised life beyond death.

❖ The Resurrection Vindicated His Claims

Jesus had claimed unique identity and authority. The resurrection stands as the divine vindication of those claims. Romans says He was:

❑ “declared to be the Son of God with power... by the resurrection from the dead:” — Romans 1:4

The resurrection distinguishes Jesus from every ordinary martyr. Many people have died bravely. Many have died for convictions. The Christian claim is that Jesus did not remain in death. That changes the meaning of everything that came before.

4.11. Why Did Jesus Leave After Rising?

After the resurrection, Jesus did not remain permanently visible upon earth. He ascended. Why? First, He was returning to the Father.

He had already said:

❑ “I leave the world, and go to the Father.” — John 16:28

Again:

❑ “It is expedient for you that I go away.” — John 16:7

His mission had always contained both descent and return.

- He came from the Father.
- He entered the world.
- He completed His work.
- He returned to the Father.

❖ He Went to Prepare a Place

Jesus told His disciples:

❑ “I go to prepare a place for you.” — John 14:2

Then:

❑ “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again...” — John 14:3

His departure was therefore not abandonment. It was connected to preparation and return. He left with a promise.

23. He Ascended to Continue His Work

Christ's work did not cease at the ascension. Hebrews presents Him as living and interceding.

❑ “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”
— Hebrews 7:25

This verse is profound. **He ever liveth.** And because He lives, He continues to act. His work after resurrection is not merely historical remembrance. It is present ministry.

4.12. He Is Our High Priest and Advocate

Hebrews describes Jesus as:

- “a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...” — Hebrews 4:14

And because He experienced human weakness:

- “we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities...” — Hebrews 4:15

Therefore:

- “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace...” — Hebrews 4:16

The Christ who is now with the Father is not detached from humanity.

- He knows human weakness.
- He knows temptation.
- He knows suffering.
- And He represents humanity before God.

❖ He Is Our Advocate

John writes:

- “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:” — 1 John 2:1

This adds another dimension to His continuing work. He is not merely a figure from the past. He is presented as humanity's advocate with the Father. Again, Christianity's hope is anchored not merely in what Jesus did, but in who He is now.

❖ He Continues to Give Life

Jesus declared:

- “because I live, ye shall live also.” — John 14:19

The life of Christ therefore remains the foundation of Christian hope. His followers do not merely imitate a dead example. They trust a living Lord. This is why the New Testament repeatedly speaks of believers as being “in Christ.” The relationship is living.

4.13. He Left Because His Mission on Earth Had Entered a New Phase

Before His death, Jesus' work centred upon His bodily presence in one place. After His ascension, His followers were sent into all the world.

He said:

□ “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...” — Matthew 28:19

And:

□ “ye shall be witnesses unto me... unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
— Acts 1:8

The mission now expanded through those who followed Him. His departure did not end the work. It extended it.

❖ He Promised His Presence

Before ascending He said:

□ “lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”
— Matthew 28:20

His physical departure did not mean spiritual absence. He promised continual presence with His people. This is one of the reasons His followers throughout history have spoken of knowing Him personally rather than merely studying Him historically. He could not be everywhere present due to the limitations of his human body, but he promised to send his own Spirit that could now enable him to be everywhere present (omnipresent).

❖ He Promised to Return

The ascension must never be separated from the promise of return.

The angels said:

□ “this same Jesus... shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” — Acts 1:11

Jesus Himself had said:

□ “I will come again...” — John 14:3

Therefore the Christian story remains unfinished. His first coming was in humility. His return will complete the hope He began.

4.14. What Will His Return Accomplish?

Scripture connects Christ's return with resurrection, judgment, restoration, and reunion.

Paul writes:

□ “the dead in Christ shall rise first:”
— 1 Thessalonians 4:16

Then:

□ “so shall we ever be with the Lord.”
— 1 Thessalonians 4:17

Christ's mission therefore stretches;

- From creation to incarnation,
- From incarnation to cross,
- From cross to resurrection,
- From resurrection to ascension, and
- From ascension to return.

His work is not yet finished in the full historical sense. The final restoration still lies ahead.

❖ Why Humanity Needed More Than a Teacher

We can now see more clearly why Jesus cannot be reduced to a philosopher. Humanity's problem was Not merely ignorance —It was sin. Not merely confusion — but Alienation. Not merely poor ethics —but Bondage. Not merely mortality — but Death.

- A teacher can instruct —But teaching alone cannot reconcile.
- A philosopher can reason —But philosophy cannot conquer death.
- A reformer can improve society —But social reform cannot remove guilt.
- A religious leader can prescribe devotion —But devotion alone cannot restore what sin has broken.

The mission of Christ addressed the deepest condition of humanity.

4.15. His Coming Was an Act of Divine Pursuit

One of the most beautiful truths in the Gospel is that humanity did not first climb upward to God. God came downward toward humanity.

Jesus said:

❑ “the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
— Luke 19:10

The lost did not first find the Shepherd. The Shepherd came seeking the lost. This changes the entire character of religion. At its centre, the Gospel is not man's ascent to God. It is God's descent toward man.

❖ The Mission Reveals the Value God Places on Humanity

The price of rescue reveals the value placed upon the lost.

Peter writes:

❑ “ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...”
— 1 Peter 1:18

But:

❑ “with the precious blood of Christ...”
— 1 Peter 1:19

If humanity were worthless to God, such a mission would make no sense. The cross therefore speaks not only about the horror of sin. It speaks about the value God places upon those He seeks to save.

❖ Christ Came to Restore What Sin Had Broken

The mission of Jesus can therefore be understood as restoration.

- Sin damaged humanity's relationship with God. Christ came to reconcile.
- Sin distorted the knowledge of God. Christ came to reveal the Father.
- Sin enslaved. Christ came to set free.
- Sin condemned. Christ came to forgive.
- Sin produced death. Christ brought life.
- Sin introduced separation. Christ restores communion.
- Sin brought humanity under fear. Christ brings hope.

4.16. Salvation Is Not Merely Escape From Punishment

To understand Christ's mission properly, salvation must not be reduced merely to avoiding destruction. Jesus came to restore people to God.

He prayed:

□ “that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee...”
— John 17:21

And He said:

□ “this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” — John 17:3

Eternal life therefore begins in restored relationship. It is knowing God and Christ. The Gospel is not merely about where a person goes after death. It is about whom a person belongs to now.

❖ His Mission Reveals His Character

- Why did Jesus come? — Because He loved.
- Why did He endure? — Because He loved.
- Why did He serve? — Because He loved.
- Why did He give Himself? — Because He loved.

Paul wrote:

□ “the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
— Galatians 2:20

The mission cannot be separated from the person. What Christ did reveals who He is. His sacrifice was the outward expression of His inward character.

❖ Why Did He Go?

We can now answer this more clearly. He left because His earthly mission in human flesh had reached completion. He returned to the Father. He went to prepare a place. He entered His continuing ministry. He intercedes. He advocates. He remains the living connection between humanity and the Father. And He left with the promise that He will return. His departure was therefore not an ending. It was a transition.

4.17. His Entire Mission Can Be Seen in One Verse

John 16:28 summarises the movement beautifully:

❑ “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.”

There is His origin. His incarnation. His mission. His departure.

And within those words lies the entire journey we have been examining. But His story does not end even there.

He promised:

❑ “I will come again...” — John 14:3

❖ The Question Now Becomes Personal

At this point the book can no longer remain only theoretical. The investigation into Jesus is beginning to turn toward the reader.

- If Jesus truly came to seek the lost, then we must ask: — **Am I lost?**
- If He came to save sinners: — **Do I need saving?**
- If He came to reconcile humanity to God: — **Am I reconciled?**
- If He came to reveal the Father: — **Do I truly know the Father He revealed?**
- If He died for sin: — **What is my relationship to sin?**
- If He rose from the dead: — **What does His resurrection mean for my own death?**
- If He lives now: — **What relationship do I have with the living Christ?**
- If He will return: — **Am I prepared to meet Him?**

4.18. Why Should Humanity Follow Him?

We have now examined four fundamental questions.

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
2. What manner of person was He?
3. What makes Him unique?
4. Why did He come, die, rise, and return to the Father?

One final question remains. It is the question contained in the title of this book. If all that Scripture says concerning Him is true—

- if He is the Son of the living God;
- if He came forth from the Father;
- if He revealed the Father's character;
- if He lived without sin;
- if He loved humanity;
- if He bore sin;
- if He died willingly;
- if He rose from the dead;
- if He lives now;
- if He intercedes;
- if He gives eternal life;
- if He will return —

then what should humanity do with Him?

- Is admiration enough?
- Is intellectual agreement enough?
- Is religious association enough?
- Is knowing facts about Him enough?

Jesus did not merely say: **Understand me.** He said: **“Follow me.”**

Therefore the final chapter must address the question directly:

WHY SHOULD HUMANITY FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST AT ALL?

Chapter 5

WHY SHOULD HUMANITY FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST AT ALL?

*The Call to Trust, Love, Obey, Know, and Follow the
Son of the Living God*

5.0 Why should humanity follow Him at all?

We have reached the question around which this entire book has been built. Not merely *who was Jesus Christ?* Not merely *what did He teach?* Not merely *why has He influenced history?* But **Why should humanity follow Him at all?** This is the decisive question.

A person may admire Jesus without following Him. A person may respect His teachings without surrendering to Him. A person may believe that He existed historically without believing in Him personally. A person may call Him a great teacher, a prophet, a moral example, or even the Son of God, yet still refuse His call. Jesus Himself made clear that intellectual recognition alone is not the same as discipleship.

He said:

❑ [“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”](#)
— Luke 6:46

Therefore, the final question is not merely what humanity thinks about Jesus. It is what humanity will do with Him.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because of Who He Is

The first reason to follow Jesus is not simply because His teachings are useful. It is because of His identity. If He were merely one wise man among many, then humanity could reasonably select from His teachings what seemed useful and disregard the rest. But if He is what Scripture declares Him to be, then such selective admiration is inadequate.

Peter confessed:

❑ [“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”](#) — Matthew 16:16

Jesus declared:

[“I came forth from the Father...”](#) — John 16:28

John wrote:

[“All things were made by him...”](#) — John 1:3

Paul wrote:

[“And he is before all things...”](#) — Colossians 1:17

If these statements are true, then Jesus is not merely asking humanity to consider His opinion. He speaks with an authority rooted in His identity. The question of following Him therefore begins here: **Who is He?** If He is truly the Son of the living God, then His call carries a weight no ordinary human teacher can claim.

5.1. We Should Follow Him Because He Reveals the Father

Humanity has always asked what God is like. Is God distant? Harsh? Indifferent? Unknowable? Jesus answered that question not merely through explanation but through His own life.

He said:

□ “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...” — John 14:9

To understand the character of God, we are invited to look at Christ.

- Look at the way He treated the weak.
- Look at His compassion.
- Look at His patience.
- Look at His hatred of hypocrisy.
- Look at His mercy toward sinners.
- Look at His truthfulness.
- Look at His love.
- Look at His sacrifice.

Jesus did not reveal a God who delights in human destruction. He revealed a Father who seeks the lost. If humanity desires to know God, Christ stands at the centre of that revelation.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because His Character Is Worthy of Trust

Trust cannot be demanded merely by authority. Trust must also be supported by character. Jesus possessed both. He was truthful. Compassionate. Holy. Humble. Courageous. Faithful. Forgiving. Self-sacrificing. Consistent.

- He did not use power to enrich Himself.
- He did not manipulate people for personal advantage.
- He did not seek political control.
- He did not pursue earthly wealth.
- He did not exploit weakness.
- He did not abandon His principles when they became costly.
- He taught love for enemies and practised it.
- He taught humility and lived it.
- He taught obedience and obeyed.
- He taught sacrifice and gave Himself.

This makes His character uniquely trustworthy.

5.2. We Should Follow Him Because He Understands Human Weakness

Jesus did not remain distant from the human condition. He entered it.

- He experienced hunger.
- Weariness.
- Rejection.
- Temptation.
- Sorrow.
- Loneliness.
- Pain.
- Betrayal.
- He wept.
- He suffered.
- He was misunderstood.

Hebrews says:

□ “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities...” — Hebrews 4:15

Jesus therefore understands human weakness not merely theoretically. He experienced human life. This makes His call to follow Him profoundly personal. He does not lead from a distance. He knows the road.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because He Overcame What Humanity Could Not

Humanity struggles with sin. Human beings repeatedly know what is right yet fail to do it. Jesus faced temptation and overcame.

Hebrews says:

□ “yet without sin.” — Hebrews 4:15

Where humanity failed, He remained faithful. Where Adam disobeyed, Christ obeyed. Where sin ruled, Christ overcame. This is one reason He is more than merely an adviser. He demonstrated in human life what perfect obedience to God looks like.

5.3. We Should Follow Him Because He Came to Save

Jesus did not merely diagnose the human problem. He came to solve it.

He said:

❑ “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
— Luke 19:10

He did not come merely to condemn the broken condition of humanity. He came to recover. To reconcile. To forgive. To restore. This distinguishes His mission from mere moral criticism. He did not stand over fallen humanity and say only: **You have failed.** He entered humanity’s condition and opened a way back to God.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because He Gave Himself for Us

The greatest evidence of Christ’s love is not merely in His words. It is in His sacrifice.

He said:

❑ “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”— John 15:13

Then He did exactly that.

Paul wrote:

❑ “the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” — Galatians 2:20

The cross reveals that Christ’s relationship with humanity was not based on self-interest. He gave Himself. This makes His call to follow Him fundamentally different from the call of an ambitious ruler seeking servants. He first served. He first sacrificed. He first gave. Then He said: **“Follow me.”**

5.4. We Should Follow Him Because He Forgives

Human beings carry guilt. Some guilt is visible. Some is hidden. Some sins are remembered by others. Some are known only to the individual and God. Jesus came with the authority to forgive. To the paralysed man He said:

❑ “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” — Mark 2:5

John writes:

❑ “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:” — 1 John 2:1

Following Christ therefore offers not merely moral improvement but reconciliation. A person does not have to remain permanently defined by past sin. Forgiveness is possible.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because He Gives a New Life, Not Merely New Rules

Human beings often attempt to change through rules alone. Rules can restrain behaviour. But they cannot by themselves transform the heart. Jesus said:

❑ “Ye must be born again.” — John 3:7

This is much deeper than behaviour modification. Christ came to produce transformation from within.

He said:

❑ “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”
— John 8:36

The Gospel is therefore not merely:

Try harder. It is: Come to Christ and be changed.

5.5. We Should Follow Him Because His Way Gives Meaning to Human Life

Human beings seek meaning in many places.

- Wealth.
- Achievement.
- Status.
- Pleasure.
- Education.
- Family.
- Recognition.
- Power.

But all these things are limited.

Jesus asked:

□ “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” — Matthew 16:26

This question exposes the weakness of purely earthly success. A person may gain much and still lose what matters most. Jesus redirects life toward eternal realities. He teaches that the value of life cannot be measured merely by possessions or achievement.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because He Gives Rest to the Burdened

Human life can become heavy.

- Guilt.
- Fear.
- Anxiety.
- Grief.
- Failure.
- Disappointment.
- Weariness.

Jesus said:

□ “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” — Matthew 11:28

Notice again the personal language. He did not merely say:

Study my philosophy and find rest.

He said:

Come unto me.

The rest He offered was bound to His person.

5.6. We Should Follow Him Because He Gives Peace the World Cannot Give

Jesus said:

☐ “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth...” — John 14:27

The world may give temporary security. Christ offers a peace rooted in reconciliation with God. This does not mean absence of trouble. Jesus Himself said:

☐ “In the world ye shall have tribulation...” — John 16:33

But He added:

☐ “be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Christian peace is therefore not the denial of suffering. It is confidence in the midst of it.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because He Tells the Truth About Humanity

Jesus did not flatter humanity. He exposed the heart. He taught that evil proceeds from within. He confronted pride.

- Hypocrisy.
- Greed.
- Lust.
- Hatred.
- Self-righteousness.
- Unbelief.

He did not tell people merely what they wanted to hear. He told them what they needed to hear. A trustworthy guide must tell the truth even when that truth is uncomfortable. Jesus did.

5.7. We Should Follow Him Because He Tells the Truth About God

False ideas about God produce fear, superstition, and distorted religion. Jesus corrected these distortions.

- He taught humanity to address God as the Father.
- He revealed God's compassion.
- He showed that religion without mercy is empty.
- He exposed traditions that displaced God's commandments.
- He revealed that God seeks worship in spirit and truth.

Following Christ therefore means allowing Him to correct our understanding of God.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because He Values People Differently From the World

The world often measures people by wealth, power, education, appearance, tribe, race, status, influence, and usefulness. Jesus repeatedly overturned such measures.

- He welcomed children.
- He touched lepers.
- He spoke with the despised.
- He received sinners.
- He praised a poor widow.
- He ate with publicans.
- He noticed people others ignored.

He taught:

❏ “For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself...” — Luke 9:25

Christ reveals that every human being possesses a value greater than worldly status.

5.8. We Should Follow Him Because He Redefines Greatness

Human beings naturally seek position. Jesus said:

❑ “whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;”
— Matthew 20:26

And He demonstrated it. He washed feet. He served. He gave. He humbled Himself. Following Christ therefore means rejecting greatness defined by domination. His model is service. This is one of the most radical moral reversals in human history.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because He Gives a Standard Greater Than Society

Human morality often changes with culture. What one generation condemns, another may normalise. Jesus did not ground righteousness in public opinion. He grounded it in the will of God. This gives His followers a moral reference point beyond fashion and social pressure.

He said:

❑ “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”— John 14:15

Following Christ therefore involves obedience, not merely emotional attachment. And loving God is not merely emotions, but obedience.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because His Call Is to Transformation

Jesus did not call people merely to add religion to an unchanged life. He said:

❑ “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself...”
— Matthew 16:24

Discipleship involves surrender. Self-denial. Change. Obedience and Growth. A follower of Jesus cannot remain content merely to carry His name.

John writes:

❑ “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” — 1 John 2:6

The test of discipleship is resemblance. Jesus said I always do the will of my Father. Likewise, if we want to follow Jesus, we should always do His will.

❑ “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” — 1 Peter 15

5.9. We Should Follow Him Because He Gives Hope Beyond Death

Every human life eventually confronts death. Achievements end. Possessions remain behind. Bodies weaken. Generations pass. Jesus speaks directly into this fear.

He said:

❑ “I am the resurrection, and the life...”
— John 11:25

And:

❑ “because I live, ye shall live also.”
— John 14:19

This is not merely comfort concerning death. It is a claim to authority over death. If true, it gives Jesus a significance no ordinary philosopher can possess. And we know its true because raised Lazurus, Jairus’s daughter and window of Nain’s son.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because He Rose From the Dead

The resurrection stands at the centre of Christian hope. A dead teacher may leave wisdom. A living Christ gives hope.

Paul said:

❑ “if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”— 1 Corinthians 15:14

Christianity therefore does not ask humanity to trust merely in ideas or words of dead people. It asks humanity to trust in a living person. Having defeated death, He is alive forevermore.

5.10. We Should Follow Him Because He Lives Now

Hebrews says:

☐ “he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” — Hebrews 7:25

John calls Him:

☐ “an advocate with the Father.” — 1 John 2:1

The Jesus of Scripture is not merely a historical memory. He lives. He intercedes. He advocates. He remains active. This is why Christian faith is relational rather than merely memorial.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because He Promised to Return

Jesus said:

☐ “I will come again...” — John 14:3

His return means history is moving toward a conclusion. Humanity is not drifting endlessly. There is a destination. A reckoning. A restoration. A reunion. Following Christ therefore gives history meaning and direction.

❖ Why Humanity Longs for a Personal Savior

Because human beings carry deep inner realities:

- loneliness,
- guilt,
- fear of death,
- longing for meaning,
- desire to be known,
- desire to be loved fully.

The Bible presents Christ as uniquely able to meet those needs because:

- He knows humanity completely,
- He understands suffering,
- He entered human weakness,
- He yet possesses divine life and holiness.

5.11. We Should Follow Him Because His Promises Reach Beyond the Present World

Human governments can promise laws. Employers can promise salaries. Doctors can sometimes prolong life. Philosophies can offer ways of thinking. But Jesus promises eternal life.

He said:

❑ “And I give unto them eternal life...”
— John 10:28

That promise is extraordinary. If false, it should be rejected. If true, nothing could be more important. Which person has ever made such a claim? Aren't they all dead in their graves? Yet Jesus demonstrated that perfectly by raising his friend Lazarus.

❖ We Should Follow Him Because He Does Not Force Us

Jesus called. He invited. He warned. He reasoned. He loved. But He did not compel discipleship through physical force. When many followers left Him, He asked the twelve:

❑ “Will ye also go away?” — John 6:67

This is important. Christ respected the reality of choice. Following Him must be voluntary. Love cannot be produced by coercion or command. It should naturally and willingly flow from the heart.

5.12. Following Jesus Is Not the Same as Joining a Religion

Following Jesus is not the same as joining a religion. This distinction is essential.

- A person can belong to a church and not follow Christ.
- A person can know Christian vocabulary and not know Christ.
- A person can defend doctrine and still lack His character.
- A person can perform religious activity while living contrary to His will.

Jesus warned:

❑ “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven...” — Matthew 7:21

The issue is deeper than identification. It is obedience to the Father. Following Christ is personal, moral, spiritual, and practical.

❖ Following Jesus Means Knowing Him

Jesus said:

❑ “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:” — John 10:27

Christian discipleship begins with relationship. Paul’s desire was:

❑ “That I may know him...” — Philippians 3:10

The goal is not merely information. It is knowledge of the person. This explains why a book about Jesus must eventually move beyond biography.

The deepest question is not:

How much do I know about Jesus?

But:

Do I know Him?

5.13. Following Jesus Means Loving Him, Trusting Him, Obeying Him

Following Jesus Means Loving Him. Jesus said:

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”— John 14:15

Love for Christ is not merely emotion. It expresses itself in obedience.

Again:

“If a man love me, he will keep my words...”— John 14:23

This protects discipleship from sentimentality. To say we love Jesus while deliberately rejecting His words is indeed lying to ourselves.

Scripture says:

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” — 1 John 2:4

❖ Following Jesus Means Trusting Him

Jesus said:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”
— John 14:1

Trust is central. To follow Him is to;

- Believe His words.
- Believe His character.
- Believe His promises.
- Believe His testimony concerning the Father.
- Believe His promise of life.

Trust is not blind.

The preceding chapters have examined why His identity, character, mission, death, and resurrection give grounds for confidence.

❖ Following Jesus Means Obeying Him

Jesus asked:

❑ “why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”
— Luke 6:46

This may be one of the most searching questions He ever asked. The word “Lord” means little if His authority is ignored. Discipleship means placing His will above our own preferences. That is costly. But Jesus never concealed the cost.

5.14. Following Jesus Means Denying Self

Jesus said:

❑ “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” — Matthew 16:24

This is far removed from a religion centred on personal comfort. Following Jesus means that self is no longer supreme. My desires are no longer the final authority.

- My pride.
- My ambitions.
- My appetites.
- My reputation.
- My will.

All are brought under Christ.

This is one reason true discipleship remains difficult in every generation.

❖ Following Jesus Means Walking as He Walked

John writes:

❑ “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” — 1 John 2:6

How did He walk?

- In love.
- In Truth.
- In Holiness.
- In Compassion.
- In Humility.
- In Service.
- In Obedience.
- In Self-sacrifice.
- In Forgiveness.
- Dependence upon His Father.

Therefore, following Jesus means His character gradually becoming visible in the follower. And patterning our lives after His, for he is our life example.

5.15. Following Jesus Means Loving Others

Jesus said:

❑ “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”— John 13:35

Notice the identifying mark “**love**”. Not merely doctrinal vocabulary. Not clothing. Not church membership. Not public profession.

This does not make doctrine unimportant. It means truth must produce character. A Christianity that speaks accurately about Christ but refuses to resemble Christ has missed something fundamental. It is a false religion.

❖ Following Jesus Means Loving Even your Enemies

Jesus did not set an easy standard. He said:

❑ “Love your enemies...that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven”— Matthew 5:44

This is perhaps one of the clearest tests of whether Christ’s spirit is transforming a person. Anyone can love those who love them. Christ calls His followers beyond natural reciprocity. To love your enemies equally as your friends. He calls them to resemble the heavenly Father, who love both the just and unjust, the good and evil.

❖ Following Jesus Means Seeking the Father's Will

The deepest pattern in Christ’s own life was:

❑ “not my will, but thine, be done.”
— Luke 22:42

This may be the essence of Christian discipleship. To follow Jesus is ultimately to learn His relationship to the Father. To seek the Father's will. To trust the Father's wisdom. To obey even when obedience is costly. To live not for self but for God.

5.16. Following Jesus Does Not Mean Life Becomes Easy

Jesus never promised His followers a trouble-free existence.

He said:

❑ “In the world ye shall have tribulation...”
— John 16:33

He warned that discipleship could bring rejection. Loss. Opposition. Sacrifice. Therefore, Jesus should not be followed merely because one expects an easier earthly life. He should be followed because He is true. Even when truth costs.

❖ The Cost Is Great — But Jesus Says the Alternative Is Greater

Jesus asked:

❑ “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” — Mark 8:36

Here Christ places two values side by side. The whole world. And one soul. He declares that the world is not worth the loss of the soul. This forces a re-evaluation of everything humanity pursues. And since Jesus is correct, then many things regarded as ultimate are temporary.

5.17. Why Has Humanity Continued to Follow Him?

We can now return to the historical question with which this book began. Why has Jesus remained compelling across centuries?

- Part of the answer lies in His teachings.
- Part in His moral character.
- Part in the cross.
- Part in the resurrection.
- Part in the hope He gives.
- Part in the transformation people testify to experiencing through faith in Him.

But the deepest answer is simpler: **Jesus does not merely leave humanity with ideas about life. He offers Himself.**

Human beings encounter in Him;

- A person to trust.
- A character to admire.
- An example to imitate.
- A Saviour to receive.
- A Lord to obey.
- An Advocate to depend upon.
- A returning King to hope for.

❖ Humanity Must Eventually Decide What to Do With Jesus

There is a point beyond which neutral observation becomes impossible.

Jesus asks:

❑ “But whom say ye that I am?”
— Matthew 16:15

That question cannot permanently remain academic. Every person who encounters the claims of Jesus must eventually form some conclusion.

- Is He who He claimed to be?
- Can He be trusted?
- Is He worthy of obedience?
- Is His promise of life true?

These questions carry eternal consequences.

5.18. What Is So Unique About Jesus?

We can now answer the question more clearly. His uniqueness is not one isolated quality. It is the convergence of **His whole person**.

- His pre-existence.
- His sonship.
- His relationship with the Father.
- His role in creation.
- His incarnation.
- His sinless character.
- His authority.
- His compassion.
- His teaching.
- His claims.
- His power over nature.
- His power over sin.
- His authority to forgive.
- His sacrificial death.
- His resurrection.
- His present ministry.
- His promise to return.
- And above all, his love for humanity

Scripture testifies:

❑ [“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” —John 15:13](#)

And He did exactly that. Specifically, for you

❑ [“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” —Romans 5:8](#)

There has been no ordinary historical person who ever lived whose identity can be described by this combination. This is why Jesus cannot be adequately placed into the category of any philosopher, reformer, prophet, teacher, or any religious founder alone. Those categories are too small and insignificant for Him.

❖ The Astonishing Paradox

The One who created galaxies, sustains existence, existed before time, **also**: stopped for blind beggars, touched lepers, wept with mourners, forgave sinners, spoke gently to children, restored broken individuals.

Infinite majesty joined with personal tenderness. That combination is one of the most unique revelations about Christ in all Scripture.

5.19. The Final Answer

We can therefore return one last time to the title of this book: **Who is Jesus Christ, that humanity should follow Him at all?**

According to the trustworthy testimony of Scripture:

- He is the Christ.
- The only begotten Son of the living God.
- The One who came forth from the Father.
- The Word made flesh.
- The image of the invisible God.
- The One through whom all things were made.
- The One who revealed the Father.
- The sinless Son.
- The friend of sinners.
- The Good Shepherd.
- The Lamb of God.
- The One who gave His life.
- The risen Lord.
- The Advocate.
- The High Priest.
- The giver of eternal life.
- The One who will come again.
- The King of kings and the Lord of lords

And because of who He is, what He has revealed, what He has done, and what He promises, His call to you still stands: **“Follow me.”**

❑ [“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be” — John 12:26](#)

❖ The Deepest Personal Invitation

Ultimately, Christ does not merely ask humanity to study Him intellectually. He invites persons into relationship with Him.

❑ [“Come unto me...” — Matthew 11:28](#)

Not merely: “Study ideas about me.” But **“Come.”** This is why, for countless believers throughout history, Christ became not merely doctrine, religion, philosophy, but a living personal Savior experienced inwardly in conscience, transformation, hope, forgiveness, and spiritual communion.

5.20. CONCLUSION

THE QUESTION IS NOW YOURS

This book began with an investigation. Who is Jesus Christ? We have searched; His origin. His identity. His character. His claims. His mission. His death. His resurrection. His continuing work. And we have found all these Biblical claims about Him to be true and faithful.

□ “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness” — Revelation 19:11

But Jesus does not permit the investigation to remain detached forever. He turns toward the reader. And He asks the same question He once asked His disciples:

□ “But whom say ye that I am?” — Matthew 16:15

That may ultimately be the most important question any human being can answer. Not: What does my culture say? What does my church say? What did my family teach me? What do historians say? Or What do religious institutions say?

But: **Whom say I that He is?**

If He is merely a historical teacher, then admire Him if you wish. If He is merely a philosopher, study His wisdom if you wish. If He is merely a reformer, remember His courage. But if He truly is the only begotten Son of the living God, if He truly came from the Father, if He truly died for humanity, if He truly rose from the dead, if He truly lives, and if He truly will return, then admiration is not enough. The reasonable response becomes:

- Trust Him.
- Know Him.
- Love Him.
- Obey Him.
- Walk as He walked.
- Abide in Him.
- And follow Him.

For Jesus Himself said:

□ “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”
— John 10:27

And therefore, the title question receives its final answer: **Humanity should follow Jesus Christ because, according to the testimony of Scripture, no other person in human history is presented as who He is, has revealed the character He revealed, has accomplished what He accomplished, has overcome what He overcame, or offers humanity the life, reconciliation, resurrection, and eternal hope that He offers.**

And after all the questions, all the investigation, all the evidence, and all the reflection, the voice of Jesus remains astonishingly simple:

“Follow me.” ...“Come unto me.” ...“Believe on me.”

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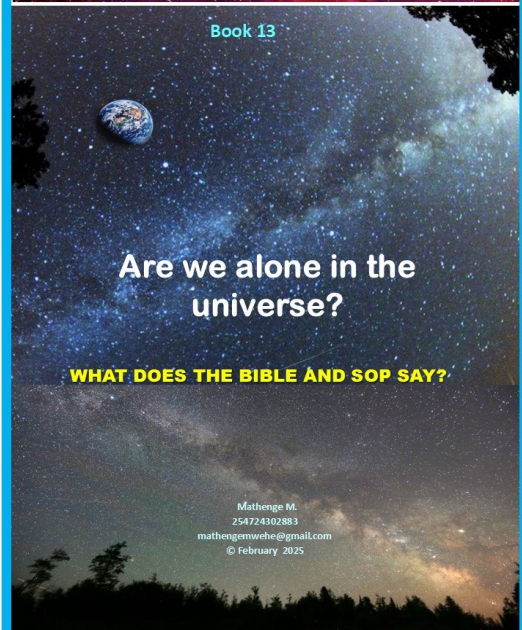
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(Psalm 85:11)

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70 FALSE DOCTRINES

EXPOSING FALSE DOCTRINES AND THEIR SOURCES

BOOK 4

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If you knowingly believe or practice any of these false doctrines and heresies, **you shall not inherit the kingdom of God**, unless you repent.

"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord God."
(Ezekiel 18:30)

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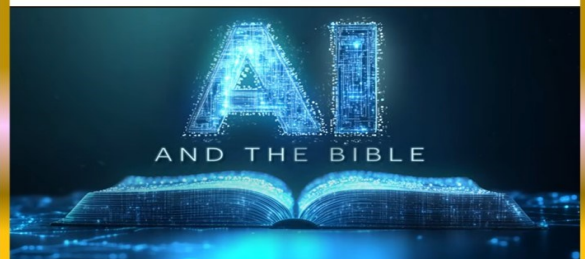
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"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever?" (Romans 1:25)