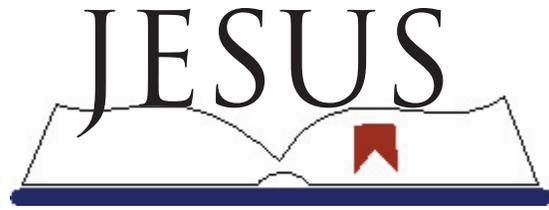


why I BELIEVED in



## The Question

Jesus asked his disciples two related questions.<sup>1</sup> “Who do men say that I am,” and “who do you say that I am?” Our earliest encounter with Christ involved the first question, but where we ultimately end up will be determined by our answer to the second. Our first acquaintance with Jesus involved who our Mother said he was, or our Grandmother (like Eunice and Lois)<sup>2</sup>, but sooner or later each must decide for themselves. Who is Jesus? I believe Jesus Christ is the Savior of the World, the eternal Son of God, and the only hope of salvation. I believe he was who he said he was, “the way the truth and the life,” and I believed him when he said, “no man can come unto the Father except by me.” I trusted him as my Savior; and I bow to him as my Lord. It was a conclusion I came to after considering his Claims, his Character, his Conduct, and his Call.

**I looked at his claims.** His claims were astonishing. No other ever dared to declare himself to be as important, no one. He said “I am the door.” He said “I am the truth,” and “I am the light of the world.” He claimed that he was the only way to the Father. He said, “before Abraham was, I AM.” Such a claim would be blasphemy, unless it was true. And yes, he said he was the Truth. He so set himself to be none other than the eternal, incarnate Son of God. He said, “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” On the one hand he said, we should love the Lord our God with all our heart and then in almost the very next breath said, “If anyone loves [their] mother or father more than me, he is not worthy of me.” If his claims were wrong in any respect, then he is nothing more than a mad-man, but if his claims are true, then he is Lord. He predicted his own arrest and death. More importantly, he predicted his own resurrection. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rise again.” No one can give a satisfactory explanation of what happened to the body of Jesus, if he did not rise on the third day. Over five hundred witnesses attested, at the very risk of their own lives, that he rose again. After considering all the claims, I came to the conclusion that He must be my Lord.

**I looked at his conduct.** The historical record says it best. “He went about doing good.” He did more in his three-year ministry than a million could do in a lifetime. He feed the hungry, healed the sick, defended the helpless, and taught the ignorant. Little children flocked to him, bearing witness to the magnetic goodness that radiated from his heart with a welcoming warmth. He said himself that he did not come to be served, but rather to serve. He was the servant of servants. Nicodemus called him a “Teacher come from God.” His life was his lesson. The world was his classroom. Humility was the only entrance exam to matriculate into his university. John the Baptist once asked “Art thou he, or do we look for another?”<sup>1</sup> Jesus answered, “Go and show John those things which ye do hear and see...” The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, and Jesus even raised up the dead. Another disciple said if all the things that Jesus did were put in a book, the world would not be large enough to contain it. Jesus began his ministry with a challenge to two curious souls, “Come and See.” I too had to come and see, and I am convinced by his deeds, by his conduct that he is not only a friend of sinners, he is the Savior of sinners, Teacher of teachers; he is the Lord of Lords.

**I looked at his character.** No historical figure has been scrutinized more than he. While he insisted that all men repent, he never hinted that he himself have any such need. Pilate said, “I find no fault with this man.” And after study, I agreed. There is in it no dark side, or shadow, no sin, and no shortcoming. He was divinely patient in the face of every form of suffering. He experienced a homeless life, hunger and thirst, craft of men and violence, meanness and pride, taunts from his enemies and the betrayal of

friends, and finally injustice and an ignominious death, all without complaint. Someone said “Big trees cast big shadows.” Not Jesus. He was all light. He was only pure, and morally without flaw. He was in every circumstance right and in every situation righteous.

His was the only perfectly unselfish life that ever lived. He brought the light of God into the darkest lives. He did not equate the religious life with seclusion, or somberness instead he sanctified the simple, common, and ordinary things making all life sacred. He was the world’s greatest teacher and was himself the greatest object lesson of life and self-denial. Every act, every aim, and every effort had one, and one purpose only, and that was the Father’s glory.

He was never “out of character.” He was never cross. He was never flustered. He was never foolish. He was the same in private as he was in public. He was the same at the crossroads as he was on Mt. Calvary. One sin, only one, would have disqualified him from being the object of my faith. He had none. He was spot-less, self-less, sin-less. His character demands that he was more than any mortal man, and I was forced to say with the Centurion, “surely this was the Son of God.”

**I looked at his crucifixion.** I approached the circumstances of his death with a sincere heart and was troubled by what I saw. I stood with countless other readers of the Bible account and watched him be arrested, tried, beaten, and crucified. I carefully considered what was happening as wicked and evil men conspired against him, as false witnesses attempted to malign him, and selfish politicians used him, as callous men beat him, and as heartless men crucified him. I listened to his response from the bloody cross, “Father forgive them.” And I fell my knees in faith in an army barracks and said- LORD-Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”

**I listened to his call.** “Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heaven burdened, and I will give you rest.” At first, I shifted the weight of my heavy burden, and considered if it could be true. I saw others respond to his call. He called Peter and he left his nets, he called Mathew and he left his moneychangers table, he called Zacchaeus, and he climbed down out of his Sycamore tree into a new life. He called the woman at the well, and he called everyone who was thirsty to drink living water. He called every sinner to believe in him. The Bible says, “For God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” I listened to his call and I knew I needed a Savior, I needed his salvation. I considered his call, his character, his claims, and his conduct. I came to the conclusion that He is exactly who he said he was. He was the Way, therefore I must follow him. He was the Truth, therefore I must trust him. He was the life, therefore I must live for him.

“Who do you say that I am?” he asked. He is the Son of the Living God, He is my Savior, he is my Lord.

Your eternal destiny will not be determined by who I say he is. It will be decided by who you say he is. Don’t believe me, read his words, consider his life, consider his claims, his conduct, his character, his crucifixion, and his call. He is calling you. He said, “Come and See.” He said, “Come, follow me.”

<sup>1</sup> Mt.16:14-15; <sup>2</sup>2Tim. 1:5;