

# Just Curious...about Christian Faith

## 2. Who on earth is Jesus?

Last week we looked at the character of God and saw that God is :

**A God of LOVE ; A HOLY God ; A JUST God**

*The notes from session 1 are available from Tim Coad or at [www.mscch.org.uk](http://www.mscch.org.uk)*

---

The same question we asked last week :

Where do we get our knowledge about Jesus?

- I. History
- II. The Bible
- III. The lives of Christians!

### **History**

There are few historians who doubt the existence of Jesus.

**Josephus**, a Jewish historian, mentions him :

At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon their loyalty to him. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive. Accordingly they believed that he was the Messiah, concerning whom the Prophets have recounted wonders.

*The above is a quote from an earlier version. Later manuscripts are more explicit but may have been "glossed up" by Christians. The key point is that this historian acknowledges the historicity of Jesus – he was real!*

Also :

**The Bible** can be regarded as an accurate historical record, written not many years after the recorded events by eye-witnesses or by those who spoke personally to eye-witnesses.

**Jesus was a real historical figure!**

**BUT**

**...was he just a man or was he, as Christians claim, GOD?**

### **The choices**

- ◆ A good man ..... but what about the extraordinary claims he made? He said some pretty amazing things about himself and if they weren't true perhaps he was :
- ◆ A mad man ..... a deluded psychopath or :
- ◆ A bad man ..... a liar and a con-man or, as Christians believe, was he :
- ◆ **GOD** – come to earth in human guise.

### **Bible : John 1 vs 1,2 & 14**

Jesus is described as "The Word" ( Greek : 'Logos').

That is he is, in a person, all that God wants to say to us about himself.

John writes "The Word became flesh" : This is called 'Incarnation'

**Bible and Christians believe**

**Jesus is GOD come in human form**

**100% human and 100% God at the same time**

### **Did Jesus ever claim to be God?**

Actually not in so many words, but he did upset the religious leaders of his time by calling God his Father. The claims Jesus made which so angered religious leaders were clearly understood by these Jewish scholars as claims to be God. So, the answer is actually, “Yes”! Jesus did claim to be God!

**Bible verses containing these claims include :**

**Mark 3 v11**

Here Jesus is meeting people possessed by evil spirits. These spirits recognise him and cry out “You are the Son of God”. So, he recognised by Satan and his demons!

**John 8 v 58**

The Pharisees are shocked because Jesus seems to be saying he knew Abraham! When they push him further he says “Before Abraham was, I am”.

Now they really are angry! This is because “I AM” was the name (YAHWEH) God told Moses in the Old Testament to use to describe God’s character. So, by using this expression, Jesus was claiming Deity. Equality with God!

**Mark 8 v 27**

Jesus is asking his disciples about rumours circulating about him! When he hears the answers he asks “Who do you say I am”. Peter replies, without hesitation, “You are the Christ” (that is, Messiah or Chosen One). Jesus agrees, telling Peter this revelation comes direct from God.

**John 19 v 7**

At Jesus trial the accusations against him centre around, “He claimed to be the Son of God”

**John 20 v 24**

Jesus appears to the disciples after he has risen from the dead. Thomas, who previously doubted, is persuaded that Jesus IS alive! He responds with the words “My Lord and my God”. Jesus does not refute his expression of worship but accepts it. The Bible says God alone is to be worshipped – by accepting Thomas’s words, Jesus accepts the claim to Deity.

**Conclusion**

**Jesus was a real historical figure**

**BUT**

**Christians believe he was GOD in the FLESH**

**Your choice.**

Read the Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. (Mark or Luke are the best places to start).

Answer the question – was this really just a good man or do his words and actions mean he was either :

**Mad, Bad or GOD**  
***You decide!***