



EXPLORING CHRISTIANITY

STRAIGHT ANSWERS TO ULTIMATE QUESTIONS IN A RELAXED SETTING



WHO IS JESUS, AND WHAT HAS HE DONE FOR US?

Introduction

1. The “riddle” of the Old Testament

“The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, **but** who will by no means clear the guilty . . .” (Exodus 34:6-7a).

How is it that God is merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity and sin, and yet He will not leave the guilty unpunished?

2. The answer: Jesus Christ

WHO IS JESUS?

1. The Christ

“Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven’” (Matthew 16:13-17).

“For all the promises of God find their Yes in him” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

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2. Fully God, fully man

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell . . ." (Colossians 1:19).

"The most striking feature of the teaching of Jesus is that he was constantly talking about himself. . . . This self-centeredness of the teaching of Jesus immediately sets him apart from the other great religious teachers of the world. They were self-effacing. He was self-advancing. They pointed men away from themselves, saying, 'That is the truth, so far as I perceive it; follow that.' Jesus said, 'I am the truth, follow me'" (John Stott, *Basic Christianity*).

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6).

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"I am trying to prevent anyone from saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make the choice: Either this man was and is the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to" (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*).

WHAT HAS HE DONE FOR US?

1. The righteous life we could not live

Jesus is "the Holy and Righteous One" (Acts 3:14).

"... in him there is no sin" (1 John 3:4).

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

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2. The penalty of death we deserved

"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'" (Galatians 3:13).

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

Righteousness upheld, mercy given

"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

3. The resurrection life now promised to us

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive . . ." (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

"We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him" (Romans 6:9).

"If we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:5).

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Week 4

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Week 1 (Preview Dinner) – *How Good Is Good Enough?*

Week 2 (Oct. 26th) – *What is God Like?*

Week 3 (Nov. 2nd) – *What Does God Think of Me?*

Week 4 (Nov. 9th) – *Who is Jesus, and What Has He Done for Us?*

Week 5 (Nov. 16th) – *What Must I Do to Be Saved?*