

**The Words, Ways, and Works of Jesus**  
**Discussion Guide for Life Group Leaders**  
Week 1: April 11, 2021

Who is Jesus? (Background)

The Words of Jesus

- *Eat my flesh and drink my blood.*
- *Gouge out your eye and cut off your hand*
- *You cannot serve both God and money*
- *Love your enemies*
- *Get behind me Satan*

The Ways of Jesus

- Give and it shall be given unto you
- Treat people better than they deserve
- Forgiveness is key to freedom
- Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God

The Works of Jesus

- Miracles such as water into wine
- Raising people from dead
- Healings
- Paying taxes with money taken from fish mouth

When considering the words, ways, and works of Jesus where do we turn to discover...

Who Jesus was/is?

**A Little Background on Jesus**

History records nonbiblical record his things about Jesus...

**Tacitus**.... Annals of History/ when writing about the great fire of Rome in AD 64 at the time of Nero the emperor (approximately 30 years after Jesus) blamed the fire on a group of people called Christians who were followers of a person called Jesus the Christ who had been crucified.

So here we have a Roman historian acknowledging Jesus and Christians at the time apart from the biblical accounts.

### **Pliny** the elder (Gaius Plinius Secundus AD23-79)

- Also a Roman
- Philosopher

### **Josephus**

- Jewish historian first century AD
- Jews did not believe Jesus was the messiah but he recorded
- Chronicles the crucifixion of Jesus also mentioning Pontus Pilate the Roman governor at the time.

### **Lucian**

- Greek philosopher born 125-200 AD
- Also made mention of Jesus in his writings

So we see a combination of records that although do not acknowledge anything about the deity of Jesus all still recognize that he was a person of historic significance, who at the very least was attributed to be an outstanding person, teacher, revered by his followers. Recorded rumours of his miraculous feats.

### **Lee Strobel**

- Author of Case for Christ and other books
- Apologist
- Former legal editor for The Chicago Tribune
- Movie available on Netflix The Case for Christ (excellent resource to watch for credibility to the claims of Jesus)

What does the Bible add to these outside sources?

The Bible:

- of course it had a bias
- Collection of historic records and documents
- Historians agree that the reliability of the New Testament records are very accurate.
- Whether one believes what is written in them is another matter. But there reliably is essentially unquestioned based on the number of original manuscripts and the dating back to the first century.
- These documents were written by people who knew a Jesus in many cases and by others who believed what Jesus taught

Key to all the biblical records is that Jesus claimed to be God.

“The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us

from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.”

Hebrews 1:3

Jesus said if you have seen me you have seen the Father.

Paul referred to Jesus as the image of the invisible God

“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross.”

Colossians 1:15-20

“Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:6-11

Jesus was fully God and fully human.

Historians suggested Jesus was a wise man, a revolutionary, a teacher, a leader, but Jesus said he was God himself.

“Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe.”

Hebrews 1:1-2

So over the next few weeks we will share in some conversations about what Jesus said and taught. We will discuss some of the teachings of Jesus from the records that record what He said.

Takeaway:

It was clear in Jesus mind that He was God.

Potential Discussion Questions:

- 1) What stands out to you as one of the most confusing things Jesus ever said?
- 2) What gives you confidence in terms of believing that Jesus is/was God?
- 3) In what way does it help your faith to know that Jesus disciples died martyrs deaths embracing the truth that Jesus both rose from the dead and that they believed His claim to be God?
- 4) What push back have you encountered as to why people do not believe that Jesus is God?