

Here is a prayer that may help you know what to say to God if you want to act on what you've just read: "God, I am a sinner that stands before You under judgment because of my sins. I come to You with no merits of my own, but on the merits of the Person and work on the cross of Your Son, Jesus. God, because of what Jesus did for me, please forgive my sins that have separated me from You. Help me from this day forward to live for You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

If you have any more questions about trusting Christ or growing in your faith we want to help. We invite you to worship and grow in God's grace with us. We also want to know if you made a decision to trust Christ. Please contact us at info@bible-baptistchurch.org or call us at 763.486.8363.

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WHO DO MEN SAY THAT I AM?

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This was the question posed to the disciples in Matthew 16:15 (cf. Matthew 22:42). The answer to this question is just as important today as it was in the 1st century. Depending on who you ask you might get very different answers:

- Those of the Muslim faith contend that Jesus is merely a prophet, or messenger, similar to men like Mohamed or Moses (Qur-ān, 5:75; 6:85; 19:30). Jesus is not God or the Son of God (Qur-ān, 5:17; 9:30).
- Catholics believe that Jesus is true God and true man (Catechism of the Catholic Church, §464) and that Christ's sacrifice is the "source of eternal salvation" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, §617) which is orthodox Christian teaching. However, they add that Mary is a "wholly unique member of the Catholic Church" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, §967). In fact, she is "the Mother of the [Catholic] Church" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, §963) and is considered to play a role in the salvation of people as an "Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, §969).
- Those of the Jewish faith argue that Jesus was a historical man but not the awaited Messiah (John 7:41-42). "Judaism knows nothing of redemption through an intermediary or intercessor between God and man" (Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 406). To some, Jewish Messianic hope surrounds an age more so than a person (Encyclopedia Judaica, 11:1480).
- Mormons maintain that Jesus is a brother of Satan (Pearl of Great Price, Moses 5:13). He is also both the Father and Son at the same time (Book of Mormon, Mosiah 15:2-3; Alma 11:38-39).
- Jehovah's Witnesses advocate that Jesus is a god (New World Translation, John 1:1; 10:33); a created being like you and me.
- Unfortunately, even some who profess to be Christians believe that Jesus was merely a historical figure. He came, they assert, to provide greater social well-being and fight against political oppression with a moral and ethical message. They say they are searching for the "historical Jesus."

Fortunately, there is a source to which we can turn to determine the truth. Here is what the Bible says about Jesus Christ:

- Jesus was known as a prophet (Matthew 14:5; 21:46; Luke 24:19; John 4:19; 6:14) but more importantly He is the Christ (Luke 2:11; John 20:31; Romans 5:1), the chosen One of God (Luke 9:35), the Son of God, and God the Son (Matthew 16:16; Colossians 1:13; John 3:16).
- Jesus alone is our advocate before the Father (1 John 2:1). Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). Mary has no part in the redemption of man as a Mediatrix. Jesus is the only way to God (Acts 4:12). Jesus said "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6).
- Jesus was the awaited Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament (Luke 24:27; John 1:41, 45; Acts 18:28) whom many of the Jews rejected (John 1:11). Jesus came to die as the Lamb of God (Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29, 36) for the sins of the world (John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:6; 1 John 2:2).
- Jesus is not Satan's brother. He is Satan's creator (Colossians 1:16). While Jesus is God, He is not the Father. The Father and Son are two different personalities (Matthew 3:17).
- Jesus is not a god, but He is the God (Matthew 1:23; John 8:58; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13), the second Person of the Trinity (Colossians 2:9; 2 Corinthians 13:14) without beginning, and without end (John 1:1; Revelation 21:6; 22:13). Jesus has always existed (John 1:1).
- Jesus' mission was not to establish social programs or to fight against political oppression. In fact, He avoided political activism (John 6:15; 18:36). He came to provide spiritual well-being, not social wholeness (Mark 2:17) by giving His life as a ransom for sin (Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:6).

So who do you say Jesus is? Here is why it is so critical to rightly understand who Jesus is. It is because He is the only solution to our biggest problem—sin. Sin has separated us from God (Isaiah 59:2). The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God in hell (2 Thessalonians 1:9). Sin is universal, no person, including you, is without sin (Romans 3:23). Therefore, all people need to be saved from their sin and reconciled to God. The only way to restore our broken relationship with God is through Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18). Acts 4:12 says "And there is no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." So how can you be saved?

First, acknowledge your sins which separate you from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Our own efforts and merits are altogether insufficient to please God or to merit heaven (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Second, believe that Jesus paid the price necessary for the forgiveness of your sins. Jesus Christ came to satisfy God's wrath on your behalf (Isaiah 53:5; Romans 5:8) and therefore, you can be reconciled, or restored, to a right relationship with God (1 Thessalonians 5:9; Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20; 2 Corinthians 5:18).

Third, ask God to forgive you of your sins (Acts 13:38; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14). God will grant you forgiveness (Daniel 9:9; John 6:37; Acts 10:43; 13:38; Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:14). There is no sin that is outside the scope of God's grace.

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