

Sermon Series: Answers to Tough Questions: Defending What You Believe

To be used with: Is Jesus God?

Sermon Title Possibilities: Who am I? ; Jesus is God

Scripture: Luke 1:26-35

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study *Answers to Tough Questions: Defending What You Believe*, this sermon communicates the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. He alone possesses the characteristics of Divinity. The events of His birth point not only to its unusual nature but to the fact that Jesus is God.

Introduction: I want to play a little game with you called, “Who am I?” I’m going to tell you the identifying characteristics or contributions of a person, and you tell me who it is. Let’s start with an easy one. “I was the first to occupy the office of President of the United States under the Constitution.” (George Washington) The next one is harder requiring a couple of clues. “I took a Portuguese ship all the way to India.” “I was the first European to round the Cape of Good Hope.” (Vasco de Gama) One more. Three clues this time. “My invention is almost 70 years old, and some of you use it every day.” “I came up with my invention while hiking in Switzerland, not while working for NASA.” “I invented Velcro.” (George de Mestral).

Mestral was hunting when he noticed these plants that tightly stuck both to his pants and his dog’s fur. With some help, he duplicated that clingy ability with manufactured material. He got the name for his fabric invention from the way it attaches itself—hooks and loops. The French words for velvet and hook are “velour” and “crochet.” If you take the first syllables of each word, you get Velcro. Now, you know the story of someone to whom we each owe a debt of gratitude.

The payment for a much greater debt was set in motion by the birth of a child in Bethlehem. Most at the time were not aware of what was occurring in that stable. Fewer still knew the name attached to that child or His true identity. To ensure your confidence in who He was and to give you information you can share this Christmas season, let’s examine what identity clues the Bible gives concerning this very special boy.

1. Clue #1 - I was heralded by angels. (Luke 1:28-29)

Few people throughout recorded history have had their births supernaturally announced. God promised Isaac and Samson’s births and explained to Rebekah the tussling of her internal twins. John the Baptist, though desired for years, didn’t come until after his father was left without words due to an angelic encounter. Only one person had three separate angelic announcements – one to his mother, another to his dad, and third by a host of angels to shepherds out in the field (Luke 2:8-14).

The infrequency of angelic birth announcements would suggest that the babies they proclaim are highly unusual. These were no ordinary events, and the

lives they lived or the part they played in God's grand plan necessitated special recognition. Since the person we are considering had the most frequent angelic interaction, we would be just in concluding that He was the most unique and important of all time.

2. Clue #2 - I was purposed with a mission. (Luke 1:30-31)

Perhaps the most common question children get asked by people outside their family is, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Though some children suggest an answer, none know for certain what their future will hold. Even after years have passed, high school graduates enter college without clear direction for their career.

Mary's baby did not suffer from uncertainty. His mission was clear. He came not to be a dentist, an engineer, a lawyer, a store manager, or even a carpenter—his dad's profession. He didn't come to make money, establish a family, fight global warming, unite the world, or end poverty. His name declares His one purpose—to save people from their sin (Matt. 1:21).

3. Clue #3 - I was predicted by prophets. (Luke 1:32-33)

Long before even His human parents existed, this baby was already a part of God's plan and central to the expectations of the Jews. God, using language that must have sounded vague to his audience, first announced his eventual arrival (Gen. 3:15). Later, the predictions increased in clarity. He would be from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:8-10), born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), have eastern kings present him gifts (Psalm 72:10-11), and be born to a virgin woman (Isaiah 7:14).

The prophecy mentioned here in our text is that he would be a descendent of David (past perspective) and that he would sit on David's throne (future perspective). This echoed the prophecy that God first made to David of an eternal dynasty (1 Kings 9:5), and that was later repeated by Isaiah (Is. 9:7). This baby would be King!

4. Clue #4 - I was birthed by a virgin. (Luke 1:34-35a)

The first two clues about our person make his birth highly unusual. The third one makes his birth impossible when you consider the accuracy of the predictions about it, and it moves into the realm of the miraculous as he continues to fulfill multiple prophecies throughout his life and death. But the reality that fully pushes this event and this person into a place all its own is the fact that he was born to a virgin.

The list of our potential candidates to fulfill the requirements for our clues has suddenly shrunk to one. Though the virgin birth prophecy was made hundreds of years before Mary, the passage of time didn't produce any possible fulfillment until that night in Bethlehem. Many births have been miraculous, and many more could be seen in that light. However, only one has happened without a contribution from a human male.

5. Clue #5 - I am uniquely related to God. (Luke 1:35b)

Everything we have seen about this birth thus far puts it into the realm of the unusual, the unique, and definitely, the miraculous. Each clue has narrowed our focus and eliminated other possible candidates. This final clue though—the Son of God—identifies unquestionably the one Mary held in her arms.

The angel's pronouncement and the events that would take place throughout His ministry along with His life, death, and resurrection convinced his mother of a truth each person must accept. Jesus is God. The only one who met all these requirements is Jesus, and the only way He could do so is because of His divine nature.

Conclusion: I'm sorry if you were disappointed with our game today. For most of you, guessing the identity of our subject from the given clues was far too easy. You knew we were talking about Jesus from the beginning, and you already accept that He is God. The clues were unnecessary.

The story we covered today was not just for your enjoyment. It was for the people you will encounter through this season. To many of them, what Luke records is a quaint, picturesque, or cute Christmas story. However, I hope that you discovered today that the facts presented here have a far deeper purpose than to merely put you in a pleasant Christmas spirit. They communicate that the baby in the manger was none other than God. Without that reality, the events of Christmas, then or now, mean absolutely nothing. Correctly identifying Jesus never has been and never will be just a game.

Chris Talton is a graduate of Liberty University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served on staff in four churches for a total of 13 years and is currently the pastor of Danville Community Baptist Church in Rawlings, MD. He and his wife of 30 years, Tammy, have two grown children and two grandchildren.