

The Question

“Who do people say that I am?”

Jesus once asked his closest followers, the Disciples, this very question. To this he got a lot of responses that he was a teacher or prophet.

Like then, today people say a lot of things about Jesus — who he was and what he did. With the Bible as the most read book in the world, Jesus may even be one of the most popular people to have ever lived! People have talked about Jesus for a long time and said many things, but Jesus didn't leave the question there.

Instead of answering right or wrong, he then changes the question to :But who do you say that I am?”

The question is always personal: who is Jesus for you?

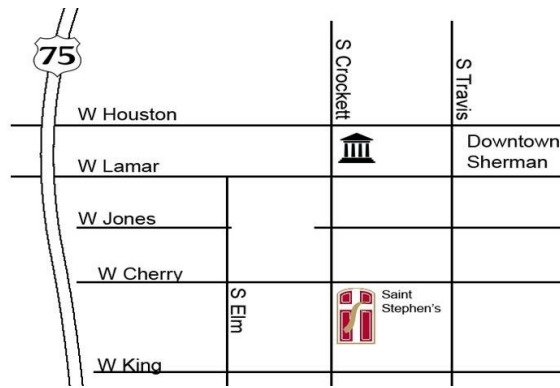
What do you know about Jesus?

What did he do?

Why was he important?

Why do so many follow him two thousand years later?

How does this matter for you now?



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[Sunday Christian Education](#)

Christian Formation (All Ages) 8:30^{AM}

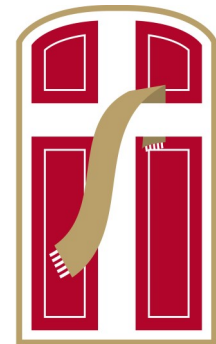
[Sunday Worship](#)



Historic Faith

Sustaining Love

WHO IS THIS JESUS?



ST. STEPHEN'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
TO BE FULL OF FAITH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT (ACTS 6:5)

Jesus of Nazareth

Jesus was born about 2000 years ago in a small town in Israel, Bethlehem. His parents were from another small town called Nazareth, where he grew up and likely learned his father Joseph's trade, either carpentry or perhaps stonework.

His birth, however, was unusual in that Scripture records his mother Mary as a virgin at the time of conception. Joseph is for this reason often called the "custodian" as his earthly father — for Jesus was really God who became a man in Jesus through the womb of Mary. This was in accordance with prophecies given centuries earlier about a suffering servant from God who would save us from sin and death.

Of his early life we know very little. Except for one story when he was 12 our records only begin when he was about 30 and began his ministry until his death and resurrection at about 33.

During that short span of time, however, Scripture says that Jesus preached, taught, healed the sick and blind, cast out demons, raised the dead, and amassed followers to be his disciples, or learners, and carry out his mission in the world — the twelve closest being the Disciples properly called.

Finally, as the prophecies foretold, Jesus was betrayed by one of his closest friends, tried by his people, and given over to the Roman Empire to be put to death on a cross.

But this was not the end. Three days later he rose from the dead in what we call the resurrection. He met his Disciples, ate with them, taught them, and finally ascended back into Heaven — giving them the responsibility to spread his Gospel.

Great Teacher

One of the first things people say about Jesus is he was a great teacher. Often seen as a moral teacher.

This is true! Jesus is known for his teaching in such things as the Golden Rule to do to others what you would want them to do to you, to love God and love your neighbor, and the sermon on the Mount where he praises those who are meek, peacemakers, or thirst for righteousness.

In fact he is called "Rabbi" which means teacher, and his followers "Disciples" which are learners. Even today following Jesus means to be a learner at the feet of our teacher, Jesus.

Healer and Prophet

But Jesus did more than talk, he also acted. It's not just the teachings of Jesus that matter, but his works as well!

Jesus was more than a moral teacher but showed himself to be a prophet and miracle worker. He healed the blind, the sick, and the disabled. He came into direct conflict with personal evil. He raised the dead. He calmed a storm, and he walked on water.

In all this Jesus was showing authority. Authority to speak directly for God the Father. He was setting himself apart from other teachers of his day, showing there was more to him than being a mere human moral teacher — he was showing us the way to God! In this he was like many prophets before him. It wasn't enough to just love your neighbor, we are also to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Jesus the Christ

But unlike other prophets before him, Jesus was unique. Jesus didn't call people to God, but to himself! Jesus didn't command us to "follow my teachings" nor "follow my God", but "follow me"! He says he, himself is the "way, truth, and life" and declares no one will get to God except through him!

How? If Jesus were merely human such a command was blasphemous. If Jesus truly spoke and acted with divine authority then such a command should have been impossible.

Peter rightly said to Jesus' question, "but who do you say that I am", that Jesus is the "Christ, the Son of the Living God!" After the resurrection, Thomas the Apostles gets it and declares "My Lord, and my God!"

No other answerer will do! Jesus isn't just a moral teacher. Jesus isn't just a prophet. As C. S. Lewis said, either Jesus was wrong about himself and knew it so was lying, or didn't know it and so was crazy, or he was right and he is the Lord, the Son of God. Either Jesus is of infinite importance, or he is of no importance, what he cannot be in moderately important.

This is where Jesus leaves the answer in our hands. Who do you say Jesus is? Merely a moral teacher? Some type of prophet? Or the Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior?

If your answer is the later then it's time to become his disciple through Baptism! Talk to our priest today about how you can start your journey following Jesus as the risen Son of God.