House to House
Heart to Heart
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VOLUME 32 NUMBER 1

What If Jesus Is Who He Claimed to Be?

Allen Webster



Most people are willing to say nice things about Jesus. They call Him a good man, a great teacher, a respected leader, even a prophet. He is these things (Acts 10:38; John 3:2; John 13:13; Luke 24:19), but none of these is sufficient (Matthew 16:13–16). Jesus claimed to be God in the flesh. If that claim is false, He is not a great teacher at all; if it is true, He is far more than one. The one question that matters is, "What if the carpenter from Nazareth is exactly who He claimed to be?"

WHAT DID JESUS CLAIM?

Before we can ask, "What if?" we must ask "What?" What did Jesus say about Himself? At His trial, the high priest directly asked Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus replied, "I am" (Mark 14:61–62). No other founder of a world religion spoke this way. Moses, for instance, spoke as God's servant. Jesus spoke as God's Son (Hebrews 3:5–6). He directed people to the Father through Himself (John 10:9).

Taken together, His claims are stunning:

- He claimed to be more than two thousand years old. "I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). That was about A.D. 30. Abraham had lived about 2000 B.C. Jesus' enemies understood that He was claiming eternality—a characteristic of God. They took up stones to stone Him (8:59), the penalty for blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16).
- He claimed equality with God. "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). His enemies understood that He was "making Himself equal with God" (5:18). He accepted worship (9:38).
- He claimed the power to forgive sins. He told a paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." The scribes correctly reasoned, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:5, 7).
- He claimed to be the only way to God. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).
- He claimed power over death. One day in Bethany, Jesus stood in the shadow of a friend's tomb and said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Then He raised Lazarus. He also declared that all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth (John 5:28–29).

- He claimed to be the final Judge of all men. "The Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father" (5:22–23).
- He claimed authority over all flesh (John 17:2).

IS THERE A MIDDLE GROUND?

Jesus never presented Himself as just a good man or a wise teacher. C. S. Lewis observed that a man who said the sort of things Jesus said, and was only a man, would not be a great moral teacher (Lewis, 1952, pp. 40–41). If His claims were false, there are only two possibilities: He knew they were false, which would make Him a liar, or He sincerely believed them, which would make Him deluded. If His claims are true, then He is Lord. Neither deception nor delusion fits the record of His life. Liars do not live the way He lived, and the scrutiny He faced would have revealed deceptions. A charlatan does not die for a hoax. Nor did Jesus act like a deluded man. His answers silenced the sharpest minds of His day (Matthew 22:46). He was calm before His accusers (Mark 15:4–5) and prayed for His executioners (Luke 23:34).

That leaves the third possibility. Does the evidence support the claim that He is who He said He is?

IS THERE ANY PROOF?

Jesus was not the only person ever to claim to be God. Anyone can make such a claim. The question is, "What evidence supports it?" Jesus backed His words.

- His life backs it up (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21–22). Even His enemies could find no fault in Him (Matthew 26:59–60; John 18:38). He challenged His critics, "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" (John 8:46), and no one gave evidence.
- His teaching backs it up. The officers sent to arrest Him came back empty-handed, saying, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" (John 7:46).
- His miracles back it up (John 10:37–38). He turned water into wine, calmed a storm, fed multitudes, healed the blind, and raised the dead. John wrote that these signs "are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (20:31).
- His resurrection backs it up. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). The tomb was empty, the guards were terrified (Matthew 28:4), the religious leaders paid a bribe (Matthew 28:11–15), and Christianity's enemies never produced a body. Jerusalem, where the crucifixion occurred, was the very city where the church exploded in growth (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:7). Frightened fishermen became fearless preachers who would die rather than deny what they had seen (Acts 4:18–20; 5:40–42). A skeptic named Saul became an apostle named Paul (Acts 9). The apostles suffered, and tradition holds that most died for their convictions. Men may die for a lie they believe is true, but they will not die for a lie they know is false. Paul wrote that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and "rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," then listed the witnesses. He was seen by Peter, by the Twelve, and by more than five hundred brethren at once, most of whom were still living when Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 15:3–8). That was an open invitation to check the facts.



WHAT IF JESUS' CLAIMS ARE TRUE?

Suppose Jesus is exactly who He said He is. What follows?

Then God exists, and He has visited us. Some imagine a God who wound up the universe, lost interest, and walked away. Jesus paints a different picture. He said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). In Him we see God's compassion for a grieving widow (Luke 7:11–15), His welcome of little children (Mark 10:13–16), His touch upon a leper (Mark 1:40–42), and His tears beside a grave (John 11:35). Those who saw the widow's son rise said it well: "God has visited His people" (Luke 7:16). God knows what tears feel like on a human face. If Jesus is who He claimed to be, we need not wonder whether God cares. We can look at Bethany, and we can look at Calvary (Romans 5:8).

Then His word is final. "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). "All authority" means no one can overrule Him. His rule reaches into our worship, our homes, our speech, our spending, and our sex lives. He has as much claim on Friday night as on Sunday morning. The question is not "What do I want?" but "What does my Lord want?" Jesus asked, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Calling Him Lord is easy; making Him Lord is hard.

Then sin is more serious than we think. We have learned to soften sin with gentler words. Dishonesty becomes a hard bargain (Proverbs 20:14), greed becomes ambition (Luke 12:15), and drunkenness becomes a good time (Proverbs 20:1). Yet a bottle of poison does not become harmless because someone pastes a candy label on it (Isaiah 5:20). If we want to know how serious sin is, we do not measure it by the opinions of men (Proverbs 14:12), but by the cross (Isaiah 53:5). If Jesus is who He claimed to be, then God Himself came down (John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:6–8) and died because of our sin (1 Corinthians 15:3). The Father did not send the Son to die for something trivial (1 John 4:10).

Then sin has a remedy. There may be no more comforting words in Scripture than these: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). A guilty conscience can turn yesterday into a prison. A person may change neighborhoods, jobs, and friends, yet carry the burden everywhere he goes. Jesus is the only One who can address the guilt itself (Mark 2:5–12). Paul reminded former thieves and drunkards that they were washed (1 Corinthians 6:9–11). "And

such were some of you" may be among the most hopeful words in the Bible. Our worst chapter need not be our last.

Then His way is the only way. If Jesus is who He claimed to be, all roads do not lead to heaven. In fact, "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). That sounds narrow to modern ears, but truth is always narrow. Two plus two equals four, and no other answer is correct.

Then death will not have the last word. A teacher may explain death, a comedian may make people laugh about it, and a physician may delay it, but Jesus is the only One who demonstrated power over it. "Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19). The grave becomes a passageway rather than a hole in the ground. Christians still weep, for love feels grief, but we sorrow with hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Psalm 30:5).

Then all will answer to Him. God "will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained" (Acts 17:31). The One who was judged by Pilate will judge Pilate. The One Herod sent away (Luke 23:11) will send Herod away (Matthew 25:41). The One condemned by the Sanhedrin will condemn the Sanhedrin. Secrets hidden from men are not hidden from Him (Hebrews 4:13). Every knee will bow, either in surrender now or in submission then (Philippians 2:10–11). Every tongue will confess—either in faith now or in anguish then (Romans 14:11–12).

Then membership in His church matters. He promised, "I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18), and He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). A man cannot claim to love the Bridegroom while avoiding the bride (Ephesians 5:23–32). When one is saved, he is automatically added to the church by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:47). It becomes his spiritual family (1 Timothy 3:15; Galatians 6:10).

CAN I REMAIN NEUTRAL?

The person who says, "I do not have to decide about Jesus," already has. Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me" (Matthew 12:30). Pilate tried to wash his hands of a decision about Jesus (Matthew 27:24), yet he still had to consider the question every person must answer: "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" (Matthew 27:22). One cannot delegate the decision to parents, leave it to a preacher, or settle it by counting the opinions of his friends.

If Jesus is who He claimed to be, and a man rejects Him, he has lost everything. Jesus asked, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26). The stakes could not be higher. The wisest thing we can do is listen to Him, trust Him, and obey Him.

Thomas doubted, but when he saw the evidence, he confessed, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). That is the right response. When many turned away from Jesus one day, He asked the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" Peter's answer serves as humanity's answer to the greater question: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:67–69).

Calling Him "Lord" is insufficient. He is the author of eternal salvation only to those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).

CONCLUSION

Jesus' identity is no small question. It reaches into every home, every heart, and every graveyard. It determines how we live, how we spend our days, and whether we face eternity prepared.

His claims demand a response. When the crowd at Pentecost heard Peter declare, "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ," they asked, "What shall we do?" Peter answered, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:36–38). That is the response all should make. Jesus still asks, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" (Matthew 22:42).

Jesus wants to know what you think.

Works Cited

Lewis, C. S. (1952), *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan).



What the Leaves Know

Autumn does not paint leaves new colors. The yellows and oranges were in the leaf all summer, hidden beneath the green. When the green fades, the true colors show. Change and pressure do the same for people. What is inside always comes out (Matthew 12:34).

"To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven."

ECCLESIASTES 3:1



Good Advice

"Instead of waiting for someone to take you under his or her wing, go out and find a good wing to climb under."

—Dave Thomas, Founder of Wendy's

God's Plan for Saving Man

Watch on youtube

Divine Love: John 3:16
God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9
Holy Spirit's Word: 1 Corinthians 2:12–13
Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16
Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37
Christian's Work: James 2:24
Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10



Remember the Friend Who Helped You

When David fled from Absalom, Barzillai helped provide for him and his weary company (2 Samuel 17:27–29). Later, when David was returning to Jerusalem, he offered to care for this faithful friend. Barzillai was eighty years old and preferred to return home (19:31–39).

David did not forget. Near the end of his life, he instructed Solomon, "Show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table" (1 Kings 2:7). Prosperity had not erased his memory of the friend who helped him in adversity.

Who stood beside you when life was difficult? Who brought a meal, offered encouragement, or helped carry a burden? Take time to remember. A call, a note, or an act of kindness may be overdue.

Before the day ends, thanking someone whose kindness you have not forgotten.

"Put on tender mercies."

COLOSSIANS 3:12

Sunday School Humor

A teacher asked her class, "Who was Noah's wife?" After a long pause, one boy raised his hand and answered, "Joan of Ark." The teacher decided to try a simpler question the following week.

"A merry heart does good, like medicine."

PROVERBS 17:22

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This Is My LUCKY DAY



A school principal's story tells of a second-grade boy whose day seemed to go wrong at every turn.

First, he fell while getting off the school bus and struck his head on the concrete. The cut required three stitches.

At recess, he collided with another boy. Two teeth were loosened, and his lip was bruised.

That afternoon, he fell and broke an arm.

The principal decided it was time to take him home before anything else happened. As they rode along, he noticed the boy clutching something.

"What do you have?"

"A quarter."

"Where did you get it?"

"I found it on the playground today." Then the little fellow smiled. "I never found a quarter before. This is my lucky day!"

Three stitches. Two loose teeth. A bruised lip. A broken arm.

And one quarter.

The boy had found something worth smiling about.

Our troubles can crowd our blessings out of view. Pain demands attention. An unpaid bill, an unkind remark, or a disappointing report can occupy our thoughts until we scarcely notice anything else.

Elijah knew something about that. On Mount Carmel, he had witnessed God answer his prayer with fire. The people had confessed, "The LORD, He is God!" (1 Kings 18:39). After a long drought, rain had returned.

Then Jezebel threatened his life.

Soon Elijah was beneath a broom tree, asking to die (1 Kings 19:4). Fear and exhaustion had narrowed his view. The victory of Carmel must have seemed far away.

God cared for His weary servant with food, rest, and further instruction. He also reminded Elijah that seven thousand in Israel had refused to bow to Baal (1 Kings 19:18). Elijah's discouragement had left important blessings outside the picture.

Thankfulness helps us see the whole day. The little boy's quarter did not mend his arm. Gratitude does not make wounds imaginary or grief painless. It helps us recognize that suffering has not taken everything.

There may still be someone who loves us, someone willing to help, a promise to sustain us, and an opportunity to do good.

The psalmist wrote, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, ad forget not all His benefits" (Psalm 103:2). Sometimes we need to remind our own souls to remember.

Faith gives us reasons for hope. Christians have more than an unexpected coin to encourage them. We can approach God in prayer, receive strength through His Word, and lean upon His people. In Christ, we have the hope of eternal life.

Paul wrote, "In everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Even a difficult day can contain gifts from a gracious Father.

Tonight, when you review your day, give the blessings time to speak. Remember the kindness someone showed, the strength God supplied, and the good you were able to accomplish.

The broken fence may need repairing. Take a moment to notice the roses growing behind it.

How Reliable Is the Bible?



Psychics enrich themselves at the expense of the gullible. Bible writers exalt God. Paul collected funds for others but surrendered his right to payment so the gospel might advance (2 Corinthians 11:9).

God's Test for a Prophet

Moses set the standard: "If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken" (Deuteronomy 18:22). A prophet had to be right 100 percent of the time. The Bible passes. Consider three examples.

1. Cyrus and Babylon: Imagine finding a parchment dated 1820 announcing that George W. Bush of Texas would become President. Texas was not yet in the Union, and Bush would not be born for over a century!

No such document exists. But Isaiah foretold Babylon's fall to the Medes and Persians (Isaiah 13:19; 21:9), naming Cyrus as God's "shepherd," who would free the Jews and order Jerusalem and its temple rebuilt (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1–7). Isaiah wrote 150 to 200 years before Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. Who but God could name a man generations before his birth?

2. The Destruction of Tyre: Ezekiel 26 describes Tyre's fate:

- Nebuchadnezzar would attack it (vv. 7–8).
- Many nations would come against it (v. 3).
- Its dust would be scraped away, leaving bare rock (v. 4).
- Its stones, timber, and soil would be thrown into the sea (v. 12).
- It would become a place to spread fishermen's nets (v. 5).
- It would never be rebuilt to its former glory (v. 14).

Nebuchadnezzar besieged the mainland city, but the people fled to an island half a mile offshore. In 332 B.C., Alexander the Great had his soldiers scrape the old city clean and dump its rubble into the sea, building a causeway to the island. In A.D. 1291, Muslim forces completed its destruction. Today fishermen dry their nets where Tyre once stood. Ezekiel looked nineteen centuries ahead, and he did not miss.

3. The Messiah: The Old Testament contains over a hundred prophecies about Jesus' birth, ministry, teaching, and death. When Herod asked where Christ would be born, the scribes answered, "Bethlehem" (Micah 5:2). Isaiah said a virgin would conceive and bear a son (Isaiah 7:14). One scholar illustrated the odds of eight such prophecies fulfilled in one man: Cover Texas two feet deep in silver dollars, mark one, and let a blindfolded man pick it out on his first try!

The Conclusion

Even a psychic with a 90 percent success rate would fail God's test. Only the Bible dares claim perfect accuracy, and only the Bible can prove it. Why? Because it alone is the Word of God. It gives us complete and accurate truth about Him and the realm He rules. —Allen Webster

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Bible Quiz

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Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 31:11 *The Book of Esther:* 1. Ahasuerus (Esther 1:1); 2. 127 (1:1); 3. Shushan (Susa) (1:2); 4. Vashti (1:19); 5. Kingdom (2:2–4); 6. Hadassah (2:7); 7. Mordecai (2:7); 8. Benjamin (2:5); 9. Hegai (2:8–9); 10. Seventh (2:16); 11. Bigthan and Teresh (2:21–23); 12. Hammedatha (3:1); 13. Bow or pay homage (3:2); 14. Pur (3:7); 15. Ring (3:10–12); 16. Put to death (4:11); 17. This (4:14); 18. Fast (4:16); 19. Golden scepter (5:2); 20. Banquet (5:4); 21. Fifty (5:14); 22. Book of the chronicles (6:1); 23. Horse (6:8–11).

V. 31:12 *The sermon on the Mount:* 1. See (Matthew 5:8); 2. Righteousness (5:6); 3. Heaven (5:12); 4. Footstool (5:35); 5. Eye (6:22); 6. Solomon (6:28–29); 7. Pearls (7:6); 8. The narrow one (7:14); 9. Good (7:17); 10. A plank (7:3); 11. Hidden (5:14); 12. Adultery (5:28); 13. Adultery (5:32); 14. Jerusalem (5:35); 15. Love (5:44); 16. Kingdom, righteousness (6:33); 17. Prophets (7:15); 18. Do (7:21); 19. Rock (7:24); 20. Authority (7:29); 21. Rooms (6:6); 22. Earth, heaven (6:10); 23. Masters (6:24); 24. Our heavenly Father (6:26); 25. Turn the other (5:39).

A POP QUIZ ON THE CHURCH

Find answers here: Isaiah 2:2–4; Matthew 16:18–19; 28:18–20; Luke 24:46–47; John 14:1–3; 17:20–21; Acts 1:8; 2; 14:23; 17:30; 20:17, 28; 22:16; Romans 10:9–10, 17; 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:1–2; 3:11; 15:1–2; 24; Ephesians 5:23; Ephesians 1:3–4, 22–23; 3:8–11; 4:4–6; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:13–14, 18, 24; 1 Timothy 3:15; 2 Timothy 3:16–17; 1 Peter 4:11; Revelation 22:18–19. *Questions are taken from the New King James Version.*

1. Who established the church? _____
2. When and where did the church begin? _____
3. In which book and chapter of the Bible do we read about the beginning of the church? _____
4. Who is the head of the church? _____
5. Who/what is the foundation of the church? _____
6. What was the price paid for the church? _____
7. Who is the savior of the church? _____
8. Who planned for the church to exist? _____
9. When was the idea of the church first conceived? _____
10. Who makes up the church? _____
11. Are all accountable people who have been saved from their sins members of the church? _____
12. Can a person be saved from his/her sins and not be a member of the church? _____
13. How does one become a member of the church? 13.1 _____ 13.2 _____ 13.3 _____ 13.4 _____ 13.5 _____
14. Were there different kinds of churches (denominations) in New Testament times? _____
15. Does the universal church (the church throughout the world) have a national or international organization and a central headquarters? _____
16. Who are the leaders of each local church (congregation)? _____
17. Is the preacher of the local congregation the pastor of the church? _____
18. What is the final destiny of the church? _____
19. Is it possible today to be the church of which we read in the New Testament? How? _____



Removing the Clutter

My wife and I were looking for a tool the other day. We knew (or we thought we knew) exactly where it was. As we climbed over the clutter in our storage shed, we both came to the same conclusion—we have got to get rid of this clutter!

Although we never found what we were looking for, my mind started to dwell on how Christianity through the centuries had become cluttered with men's doctrines. We need to remove the man-made clutter from churches so that men can follow the simple teaching of the New Testament of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament warned about future clutter in the early days of the church. Paul warned the elders of the church in Ephesus: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:28–30).

Man has no right to add to the Word. Paul wondered why many had swerved from the gospel: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6–8).

The Bible teaches that the Word is complete. No further additions are needed since "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Our Lord rebukes any who would add to His Word, explaining that modification invalidates worship: "In vain they worship Me, "Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." (Mark 7:7–8). **—Donald Fox**

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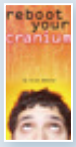
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TYPES & ANTITYPES

The ROCK in the WILDERNESS as a type of CHRIST

Read Exodus 17:1–7 and 1 Corinthians 10:1–4. **God is amazing. He supplied Israel's needs in ways that also teach us about Christ. Types are Old Testament shadows of spiritual realities revealed in the New Testament. When Israel thirsted in the wilderness, God brought water from a rock. Exodus 17:1–7 describes water supplied at Horeb after Moses struck the rock. Paul identifies the spiritual Rock with Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4).**



THE ROCK IN THE WILDERNESS TYPE	JESUS THE CHRIST ANTITYPE
God provided the rock as the source of water for Israel (EXODUS 17:6).	God provided Christ as the source of spiritual life for mankind (JOHN 3:16; 4:14).
Moses struck the rock following God's command (EXODUS 17:5–6).	Christ was smitten and wounded for our transgressions (ISAIAH 53:4–5; ACTS 2:23).
Water flowed from the rock after it was struck (EXODUS 17:6).	Spiritual blessings flow to mankind through Christ's suffering and death (EPHESIANS 1:7; HEBREWS 9:15).
God supplied water despite Israel's murmuring and unbelief (EXODUS 17:2–6; PSALM 78:17–20).	Christ died for mankind while we were still sinners (ROMANS 5:6–8).
Water from the rock satisfied Israel's thirst (EXODUS 17:3–6).	Christ satisfies spiritual thirst and offers eternal life (JOHN 4:13–14; 7:37–38).
God freely supplied abundant water for His people (PSALM 78:15–16; 105:41).	Christ freely offers the water of life and abundant blessings to those in Christ (JOHN 7:37–39; REVELATION 22:17; EPHESIANS 1:3).
The spiritual Rock followed Israel, sustaining the people during their wilderness journey (1 CORINTHIANS 10:4).	Christ remains with His people and supplies their spiritual needs (MATTHEW 28:20; PHILIPPIANS 4:19).
Moses first struck the rock at God's command but later was commanded to speak to it (EXODUS 17:6; NUMBERS 20:8–12). Failure to obey God led to Moses being excluded from the promised land (NUMBERS 20:12; DEUTERONOMY 32:48-52).	Christ was offered once for sins, and through Him we are now commanded to be baptized into Christ (ROMANS 6:3; GALATIANS 3:27; ACTS 22:16). Failure to obey God will lead to us being excluded from heaven.



C. S. Lewis On Jesus' Identity

I am trying here to prevent anyone 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 your 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 with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

—*Mere Christianity*, Book 2, Chapter 3, "The Shocking Alternative"

Who Gets the Credit?

Paul planted. Apollos watered. God gave the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6). One Christian invites a neighbor. Another teaches the Bible study. Others encourage by their kindness and example. Each has a part, but none deserves all the credit. We accomplish more when we spend less time wondering whose name will be mentioned. Let us do our work and give God the glory.

House to House
Heart to Heart
1/27



Can You BELIEVE the Whole Bible if You Haven't Read the Whole Bible?

"I believe the whole Bible."

That is a good thing to say. But here is a question worth considering: How can we believe and obey what God says if we have never read what He says?

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God… that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." In Matthew 4:4 Jesus says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." It is not possible for us to believe and obey the entire Bible if we have not read the entire Bible.

If you like to challenge yourself, you have probably made some goals for this year. If you are looking for a spiritual challenge, why not make this the year you finish reading the whole Bible?

We can help!

Call us, email us, or come visit us for a Bible reading schedule that will help you start and finish the whole book this year.

Choose a reading plan. Make time each day. Read carefully, paying attention to context and asking, "What does this teach me? How should I respond?" When something is difficult, study further. When you fall behind, start again.

If we believe God has spoken, let's listen to every word!—Matt Wallin

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