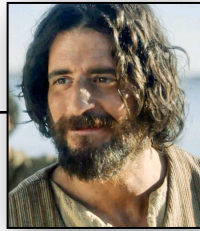


# What Makes Jesus So Different?



- *Why is Jesus different from all the leaders of the world religions? What makes him different from Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, or any other person?*

Palm Sunday is a celebration of the day when Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a colt. This was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9-10. It was symbolic that he was the Messiah, the King of Israel. As he rode in the crowds spread out their garments waving palm branches. They shouted, *“Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!”* Lk. 19:38 NLT

At this moment, the crowds were recognizing Jesus as different from anyone else who had lived on earth. He was more than a man, a teacher, or a prophet. He was the promised Messiah, the anointed one promised by God to bring forgiveness, righteousness, justice, and peace to the world. *But what makes Jesus different? What makes him unlike anyone else who has walked this earth?*

## Central Lesson:

**Jesus is the God-man, the promised Messiah, who alone saves sinners.**

### 1. He claimed (and his followers claimed) that he was **GOD** in human flesh.

*“<sup>8</sup> ...’Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’ Jesus replied, <sup>9</sup> ...Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father!”* John 14:8-9 NLT.

One time skeptic, Josh McDowell, wrote in his book, *More Than A Carpenter*, **“Most of the early followers of Jesus were devout Jews who believe in one true God. They were monotheistic to the core, yet...they recognized him as God incarnate. Because of the apostle Paul’s extensive rabbinical training, he would be an unlikely person to attribute deity to Jesus, to worship a man from Nazareth and call him lord. But this is exactly what Paul did.”** (p.12).

### 2. He backed up his teachings and claims of deity with repeated **MIRACLES**.

*“And God confirmed the message by giving signs and wonders and various miracles...”* Hebrews 2:4 NLT

Jesus claimed that He was God in bodily form, the Savior of the world, and the only way to the Father (John 14:6). **Were these claims true?** Consider the evidence. He healed all types of sickness and disease (John 6:2), he walked on water (Matthew 14:25-33), he turned water into wine (John 2:6-11), he calmed storms (Luke 8:23-25), he raised people from the dead (Matthew 9:23-26; 11:4-6; Luke 8:49-55; John 11:11-45), three of the disciples saw him in his eternal glory on the mountain of transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9), and

they also witnessed his death, burial, and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:29-32; 10:39-43; 13:29-39). An ordinary man could not do the things Jesus did. This was the activity of a supernatural being. This was the work of God in human flesh.

### 3. He claimed that he could **FORGIVE** sin.

Jesus healed a paralyzed man and added, *“...your sins are forgiven.”* Mark 2:5 NLT. To a woman, who had been living in immorality, Jesus said, *“...Your sins are forgiven.”* Luke 7:48 NLT.

Josh McDowell wrote, **“According to Jewish theology, only God could say such a thing; Isaiah 43:25 restricts forgiveness of sin to the prerogative of God alone.”** (p.18). Jesus could forgive sin because he was (and is) God. Jesus will also forgive us when we ask. No one else on earth or in history has the authority to forgive sin. This is unique to Jesus only.

### 4. He **FULFILLED** detailed prophecies foretold hundreds of years in advance.

Josh McDowell writes, **“The Old Testament contains sixty major messianic prophecies and approximately 270 ramifications that were fulfilled in one person, Jesus Christ.”** (*More Than A Carpenter*, p.142). He adds **“...all of the prophecies about the Messiah were made at least four hundred years before he was to appear.”** (p.143). Furthermore, he explained, **“Why did God go to all this trouble? I believe he wanted Jesus Christ to have all the credentials he needed when he came into the world.”** (p.150).

Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament (Isaiah 53; John 1:41). His fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies distinguishes him from all others. It is proof that he is, *“...The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* John 1:29 NLT.

### 5. He **DIED**, was **BURIED**, & **AROSE** from the dead.

The body of Gautama Buddha was cremated in Kushinagar, India, and the remains were placed in monuments that are believed to have survived until today. The body of Mohammed is buried in Medina, Saudi Arabia, and is visited by millions of Muslims every year. The body of Confucius is buried in Qufu, China. However, in Jerusalem, the tomb of Jesus is empty. It is empty because Jesus rose from the dead. As Peter stated, **“God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this.”** Acts 2:32 NLT

The Apostle Paul wrote, *“<sup>3</sup> I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. <sup>4</sup> He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. <sup>5</sup> He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. <sup>7</sup> Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.”* 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 NLT

## Central Lesson:

**Jesus is the God-man, the promised Messiah, who alone saves sinners.**

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior.
- ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
- ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday’s study.
- ▶ Attend a small group.
- ▶ Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses.
- ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.