

Knowing Jesus (Feb. 26 – Mar. 11)

Jesus is completely unique in human history. He is the most important person to know about; but because of the who He is, He is also the most important person to know. Jesus is fully human. He was while he walked the Earth and He is still so now. But he is significantly different from you and me in certain points. This makes Him both easy to relate to and difficult to know through comparison.

Throughout this study we will share important qualities of Jesus that you need to know about. It is my hope that Jesus, in His own way, will approach you as you study these things so that you will get to know Him as well.

The Sinless Son of God

I was born on April 21, 1962 and at some point approximately 9 months prior I was conceived and began to be. I had no previous lives or previous existence. The most you can say is that many aspects of my DNA existed in my ancestors. This was not the same for Jesus.

Jesus was human. He inherited some or maybe all of His DNA from Mary, but He was also the Son of God. His conscious existence has always been. He has powers that we can't even imagine. When He became "incarnate", literally in the flesh, Jesus became a being somewhat distinct from what He was before.

Becoming a **sinless** human being was more important than becoming a **powerful** human being. His powers seem to be somewhat limited by being connected to human flesh or at least constrained. The miracles that He did were mostly acts of mercy that gave proof to who He was. They were not the reason that He came. Atoning for our sins was the reason He came.

What is the root cause of us being sinful human beings?

Psalm 51:5 says that David was sinful from conception. How is that possible?

What is sin?

Read Luke 1:26-38

Why was Jesus born of a virgin?

Was Mary sinless?

What is special about Mary?

God's law must have certain unchangeable requirements for any being to be and remain in the presence of God. The presence of sin seems to preclude permanent residence with God.

Was Satan able to be with God after He had sinned? (Job 2)

Why do you think that is?

The believers from Old Testament times were segregated from a full punishment for sins even though Jesus had not yet successfully atoned for them. Why? (Rom. 3:25)

Still the wages of sin remained eternal death pending the work of Jesus.

Read Revelation 5:1-14

What is Jesus at this time? A lamb? The Son of God? A human?

When is this happening?

Why was Jesus worthy to open the scroll?

Read Hebrews 4:14-5:10

The role of a priest is to represent His group to God. Jesus is our high priest. He represents us in the ultimate presence of the Father.

If the Son of God always existed, why would v.5 say “today I have begotten you.”? What day was “today”?

Melchizedek was a character briefly introduced in Genesis 14. His name means “king of righteousness” and he is a priest of Yahweh. The other priests mentioned in the Old Testament are Levitical priests. Their order dealt only with the covenant made through Moses. Melchizedek’s order deals with God’s eternal laws pertaining to salvation (being with God forever).

What made Jesus “perfect” as a high priest?

Wasn’t He always perfect?

Humanity’s Hero

Heroes aren’t always recognized as such from the beginning. Sometimes it takes hindsight and explanation to expose just what a hero has accomplished.

Can you think of anyone who had public opinion against him or her until after their mission was complete?

Jesus’ mission was not understood until after the fact. In the midst of His most important work, He looked like a failed Messiah. His mission to atone for sins wasn’t just for a small group, like the Jews; it was for the whole of mankind. Jesus became a second representative for the whole species. Adam was the first.

Read Isaiah 53:1-12

This is a prophecy about Jesus and how He would be perceived.

How would people perceive Jesus? Can you think of examples in the Gospels that confirm this?

Whose plan was this?

How is Jesus honored when all was completed?

The Messiah was someone anticipated by the Jews to be a champion for the Jews. This was an inaccurate interpretation. Jesus' mission was for the whole of humanity against a common foe of humanity: Satan.

Read John 12:20-36

When some Greek people come seeking Jesus, Jesus seems to take it as a sign.

Of what was it a sign?

Why would the presence of Gentiles be seen as a sign?

Read 1 John 1:5-2:2

What does "light" and "darkness" represent in this reading?

Who lives in "darkness"?

What does "propitiation" (ESV) or "atoning sacrifice"(NIV) mean?

God's Image

It is impossible for us to understand the triune nature of God. How can the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be three distinct persons but only one being. All theories advanced the last 2000 years conflict with the information given us at some point.

While understanding God's being is beyond us, relating to God's personality is not. Not being able to see the Father or the Spirit is a big disability for us. But the Son took on human flesh and walked this Earth for approximately 35 years. He continues to leave an impression and increase our understanding of what God is like. If you want to understand what the Father is like and to interpret some of His actions of the past or present, look at Jesus. He is the image of God.

When you think of Jesus, how do you picture Him physically?

What is your understanding of His personality from Scripture?

Does your experience of Jesus change that picture at all?

Read Revelation 1:9-18

Does this give you a different physical picture of Jesus? How do you account for it?

How about the personality demonstrated here? Same or different?

Read through a few of the letters to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3.

Do any of these letters change your understanding of the personality of God? How so?

God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is not a being who doesn't care about things. He is patient, forgiving, eager to help, but He is also uncompromising, powerful and will bring judgment if He must. One of the most common misunderstandings of His personality is to interpret patience, mercy and forgiveness as apathy.

Read Hebrews 1:1-14.

What do you think "exact radiance of the glory of God" (ESV) means?

How about "exact imprint of His nature"?

What stories in either the Gospels or the Old Testament show God's patience, mercy and forgiveness?

What stories in the Gospels or Old Testament show God's anger or judgment?

How would you describe the personality of God taking everything into account?

Read John 14:1-11.

What does Jesus mean in verses 9 and 10?

Do you think the Father can be seen directly?

What do you think people are looking at in Daniel 7:9f, Isaiah 6, or Revelation 4?