



CHRISTIANITY REVEALED

Leaders Manuscript:

Session 1 - "Who is Jesus?"

Name: _____

Christianity Revealed ©

All rights reserved. Written by William Aitken and Nathan Vella.

All Scripture quotations are from the 1984 New International Version ^(NIV), with the exception of some drawn from the New Living Translation ^(NLT) in order to simplify the meaning of more complex passages. All underlining, italics, insertions, brackets, [], and other forms of emphasis, are ours.

We desire to see the Gospel clearly shared and see people come to know our Saviour Jesus. Because of this we offer all of our course materials for free to those desiring to utilise it for the purpose of running this course. We give permission for this material to be reproduced for running this course. However, we do ask that this course is not altered without permission. Of course, it is fine to personalise the script and use illustrations you are comfortable with. However, if you desire to make any changes to the manuscript content, structure, slides or workbook, then you must first get permission from the authors.

If you do have any suggestions or enquiries, please feel free to let us know at the following email: christianity.revealed.course@gmail.com

*For access to the entire course material, please visit:
<https://sites.google.com/view/christianity-revealed>*

Session 1 - 'Who is Jesus?'

Audience interaction: These boxes are used throughout the manuscript to give some optional questions you can ask or ways you can get your group interacting. They are more for use in 1 to 1 or small group scenarios.

Leaders note: Welcome people and explain what the sessions are about. Explain the schedule for today's session and the schedule for the coming weeks.

< SLIDE 1 >

The aim of this course is to explain Christianity in a simple way and show its basic teachings. The message of Christianity centres on the person and work of Jesus. This will be the focus of these sessions. In this first session we are going to look at the identity of Jesus.

But first, we need to ask the question:

< SLIDE 2 >

Where can we reliably learn about Jesus?

Christians believe we can learn the truth about God and Jesus from the Bible. Why learn from the Bible? To understand this, we need to look at what the Bible is and why people trust it.

< SLIDE 3 >

What is the Bible?

Christians understand the Bible to be the Word of God. If it is the Word of God, then it is there where we learn about who He is and how He relates to this world.

Audience interaction: How many books are in the Bible? What are its two key sections called?

The Bible contains 66 books and has two sections:

1. The 'Old Testament' was written between 1500-500BC. It firstly reveals God as Creator of this world. It then shows how

God works to save His people (particularly the Israelites) whilst continually pointing forward to a promised Saviour.

2. Then there is the 'New Testament', which was written between 40-100AD. It speaks of the work of Jesus Christ and the effect it had and continues to have on this world.

< **SLIDE 4** > Within the New Testament are many books, however four in particular record the events of Jesus' life. These are referred to as 'the Gospels', and consist of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They reveal that Jesus lived around 2000 years ago. We are going to mostly focus on the gospel of Mark throughout our sessions.

Why are we learning about Jesus from the Bible? Why can we trust the Bible?

Well there are many reasons: Because...

1. < **SLIDE 5** > The Bible tells us about *Historical Events*. Many Historians and Archaeologists confirm the truth of the things discussed in the Bible. (E.g. Historians thought the Old Testament was wrong in stating that there was a people group called the 'Hittites'. However, in the 1800's such criticism was silenced due to the discovery of Hittite artefacts and writings.)
2. < **SLIDE 6** > The Bible is a collection of some of the *best-preserved historical manuscripts*. < **SLIDE 7** > The New Testament is by far the *best-preserved ancient text*, with around 6000 Greek copies of the original that date within 50-400 years of the originals. The Illiad (an ancient Greek epic poem), is the next best ancient text with approximately 1800 copies that are written 500 years or more after the original. Another example is the Works of Plato, which has around 200 copies preserved around 1300 years after the original. (Note: these figures are always changing).
3. < **SLIDE 8** > The Bible is written by *Eyewitnesses*. The Biblical authors either witnessed or spoke to someone who witnessed the events recorded.

4. < **SLIDE 9** > The Bible records many events that the Jewish writers wouldn't have written if they were trying to fabricate a story. For example, the Bible speaks of the failures of people like Noah, Abraham and David (men highly esteemed, who were key leaders in the Bible). Even in the gospels, the disciples are honest about their failures as they write. If the writers were making up such stories, they wouldn't include details that make them look bad, or include statements that make these biblical heroes look bad. God's involvement in the writing of the Bible helps make sense of this.
5. < **SLIDE 10** > The Bible is a *supernatural book*, recording supernatural events and is written by God, through men. The impact it has had on millions of people affirm its truth and claim that it is a uniquely special book. People have been willing to die to defend the Bible and its teachings. Most of Jesus' disciples, who wrote the majority of the New Testament, were martyred (killed) for believing and maintaining the supernatural events of the Bible. Why would these eye-witnesses die such cruel deaths for teaching something they had made up and didn't believe to be true?
6. < **SLIDE 11** > The Bible is a book that is written by over 40 different authors, in 3 different languages, across 3 continents, over 1500 years, and yet, it tells of one consistent story that culminates in the person of Jesus (as we are about to see in our next point).

These are just some of the reasons why we can confidently trust the Bible and there are many more. That is why we'll now answer from the Bible, the following question: < **SLIDE 12** >

'Who is Jesus?'

The first important things we need to understand about Jesus' identity is that:

1. Jesus is the Promised Saviour

< SLIDE 13 >

Leaders note: Explain chapters and verses to everyone and how to find books of the Bible. Note the 'Contents' page to help them navigate books of the Bible.

< SLIDE 14 >

Audience interaction: Ask for a volunteer from the group to read the verse.

Mark 1:1 begins by saying... *"The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God."*

- The word 'Christ' is not Jesus' last name, but a title given to Him.
- It is a title that is used continually throughout the Bible and refers to the promised Saviour that God would one day send. Long before Jesus came into the world, God had promised His people that He would send a Deliverer, one who would not only rule, but have an everlasting kingship.

The need for a promised Saviour

We are now going to quickly look through the Bible to see how God foretells the coming of a deliverer and how Jesus proves to be this *Promised Saviour*.

The Bible begins with God creating everything in this universe. Everything He made was perfect. However, Adam and Eve (the first humans God created) were deceived by the Devil and chose to disobey their Maker. This is called 'sin', which is disobeying God and choosing our own way.

As a result of their disobedience, sin and its effects entered the world. This is the Bible's explanation for why death, sickness, evil and trouble occur in this world. Sin has ruined God's good creation. We see and feel the effects of sin in our own lives. We feel the effects of sin when: we lose a loved one, cancer strikes someone close to us, calamities and disasters cover the news, or when our words and actions bring deep hurt to people around us.

Leaders note: Mention some of the things currently happening in the news.

Audience interaction: You may want to ask for people to share things they have seen recently.

All of these things are simply the consequences of sin and rejecting God. But God is kind and hasn't left humanity in this terrible state. Instead, He promised a Saviour.

Just after sin entered this world, God gave a great promise to those who rebelled against Him. He promised to save people from the penalty of sin and to reverse the effects it has had over humanity and creation. In Genesis 3:15, God promised that in a future day one of Eve's offspring would come and crush the head of the Devil. During that battle, Satan would strike this offspring's heel. It's a graphic promise. And it is clearly fulfilled through Jesus. The picture of His heel being struck refers to His death, and yet it is actually His death that brings the crushing blow to the Devil, death, sin, and its consequences (Colossians 2:14-15, Hebrews 2:14).

Throughout most of the Old Testament, we see that: < **SLIDE 15** >

a. Countless Promises show Jesus is the promised Saviour

The Bible anticipates this Saviour and builds a picture of what He will be like. In part of the Bible, known as the Prophets, we see predictions and promises made about this Saviour and the work God will do through Him.

Leaders note: One of the prophets named Isaiah says, "*[The Lord] will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; He will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken*" - Isaiah 25:8. (See Isaiah 61 also)

Audience interaction: Ask for a volunteer to read the passage.

< **SLIDES 16 and 17** > One of the prophets named Isaiah, foretells the following about the promised Saviour - "*He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely, he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we*

considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity (sin) of us all.”
(Isaiah 53:3-6)

When we look at the death of Jesus in future lessons, we will see how He perfectly fulfils these promises. Amazingly, these words were spoken around 800 years *before* Jesus came and yet they predict in great detail what He would do. This is merely one example of many predictions that are made about the promised Saviour, all of which are fulfilled in Jesus.

Then, in the New Testament, we see: < SLIDE 18 >

b. People are aware that Jesus is the promised Saviour

From the outset, when Jesus is supernaturally conceived, God wanted there to be no confusion about the child’s identity and mission.

- < SLIDE 19 > Matthew 1:20-21 says - *“But after he (Joseph) had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name ‘Jesus’, because he will save his people from their sins.”*
- The name ‘Jesus’ means ‘Saviour’.

Also, in Mark 8:27-30 we see some of Jesus’ followers come to the realisation that Jesus is the promised Saviour.

- < SLIDE 20 > Jesus asks his follows *“Who do people say I am? They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked, “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.”* (Mark 8:27b-29)
- Peter understood that Jesus is the Christ, which as we said before is the title that refers to the promised Saviour.

So, the first important thing we need to understand about Jesus is that He is the *Promised Saviour*. He is the one whom God has sent to save people from sin and the consequences for rebellion against God.

Application: Who do you think Jesus is? < SLIDE 21 >

Jesus questioned His followers about who they thought He was, and we must think through this too.

- As we learn about Jesus, we are going to see how we need to come to a position regarding who we believe He is. We must either see Him as the promised Saviour (who He claims to be), or a liar, or as one who has deluded himself. As one writer C.S. Lewis says, Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic or Lord!
- The Bible doesn't allow us to think that Jesus is merely a nice guy or a good teacher. Either Jesus is the promised Saviour or the Bible's claims are false, and therefore what Jesus claimed was false.
- So, as we learn about Jesus, don't go away and think you can be neutral about these things. Don't think that you can play it safe and just sit on the fence of indecision. Sitting on the fence is actually a decision to reject Jesus as the promised Saviour.
- We either believe these things and submit to the Jesus who is King and God of this universe, or we reject Him. What will you do?

< SLIDE 22 >

Leaders note: If you are splitting each lesson into two, then end here for the first lesson. If you aren't splitting the lesson, it would be good to let your group stretch or do something to help them refocus.

Also, if you are beginning a new session here, then recap the earlier points.

< SLIDE 23 and 24 >

2. Jesus is God's Son (therefore Divine)

(We have seen Jesus is the *Promised Saviour*)

The second important thing we need to understand about Jesus is that He is God's Son.

- Mark 1:1 says, "*The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*"
- Also, in Mark 15:39, one of the soldiers who is present at Jesus' crucifixion and witnesses everything that happens, publicly says, "*Surely this man was the Son of God!*"

What does it mean that Jesus is God's Son? < SLIDE 25 >

1. **Jesus is Eternal:** He has always existed.

- John 1:1-2 says "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.*" This parallels Gen. 1:1 ("In the beginning God) to show how the Word has always existed. But who is the Word?
- Later in John 1:14, 'the Word' is clearly shown to be referring to Jesus – "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*" God the Son became a man.

< SLIDE 26 >

2. **Jesus is Creator:** He created all things.

- John 1:3 says about Jesus, God's Son, "*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*"

< SLIDE 27 >

3. **Jesus shares in the *characteristics* of God the Father:**

- John 1:18 says, "*No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known.*"

Being God's eternal Son, Jesus shares in the characteristics of God. A particular example of this is seen in how He shares all of God's Authority, which confirms He truly is the Son of God.

How is Jesus' Divine Authority displayed?

All throughout the gospel of Mark, He is shown to be the Son of God. Let's see what Jesus has authority over:

Leaders note: Get them to turn in their bibles for these longer readings in Mark.

Audience interaction: Ask for a volunteer to read some of the following passages.

< SLIDE 28 >

- Jesus has Authority over **Creation:** (He created everything and he sustains it)
 - Mark 4:39-41 - *"He (Jesus) got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"* (see also Mark 6:45ff)

< SLIDE 29 >

- Jesus has Authority over **Sickness and Death:**
 - Read or summarise Mark 5:35-43

< SLIDE 30 >

- Jesus has Authority over **Evil Spirits:**
 - Mark 1:21-27 - *"...The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching - and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him."* (See also Mark 3:11)

< SLIDE 31 >

- Jesus has Authority to **Forgive Sin:**
 - Read Mark 2:1-12

Audience interaction: Ask the audience, what does Jesus see as this man's greatest need?

- Question: What does Jesus see as this man's greatest need? (Answer: Not the ability to walk, but have his sin forgiven).

- Forgiveness of sin is *our* biggest need as well!

< SLIDE 32 >

- Jesus possesses **God's full authority**: Mark 9:2-7 – "...Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: This is *my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!*" or in Matthew 28:18 Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

< SLIDE 33 >

APPLICATION: Will we submit to Jesus' authority?

We need to ask ourselves, 'Will I submit to Jesus' authority as the Son of God?' Or, 'Will I reject Him and continue living as my own authority?'

We have seen:

- Nature: wind and waves obey him.
- Sickness, death and evil spirits obey Him.
- Yet God commands our obedience and we have spent our lives saying, "No!"
- How do we think the Son of God, who has all authority, is going to deal with us?
- And yet, as we have just learnt, how amazing is it that Jesus came as the *promised Saviour, God's Son*, so that He could save those who have rejected his authority - people like you and me.

< SLIDE 34 >

(We have seen Jesus is the *Promised Saviour* and that He is *God's Son*)
Finally, we see that:

3. Jesus is fully man (His Humanity)

The third thing we need to understand about Jesus is that He is fully man. Though He is fully God, He is also fully man. He was not 50% God and 50% man. He was not 95% God and 'somewhat' human when He came to this world. Again and again in the gospel

books, we see many things that reveal Jesus as fully human. We see that:

Leaders note: Not many comments need to be said about these passages as they speak for themselves and clearly show Jesus' human nature.

Audience interaction: Ask for a volunteer to read some passages.

< SLIDE 35 >

- Jesus was **born of a woman**
 - Matthew 1:18 - *"This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together (had sexual relations), she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit."*

< SLIDE 36 >

- Jesus **embraced** people
 - Mark 10:16 - *"And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them."*
- Jesus **ate with** people
 - Mark 2:15 - *"While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him."*
- Jesus **needed rest**
 - Mark 4:37-38 - *"A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion."*

< SLIDE 37 >

- Jesus **experienced temptation**
 - Mark 1:12-13 - *"At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert for forty days, being tempted by Satan..."*
- Jesus **experienced human emotion**

- Mark 14:33-34 - *“He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death...”*

- **Jesus experienced pain and death**

- Mark 15:37 - *“With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.”*

< SLIDE 38 >

APPLICATION: Why is it important that Jesus was a man?

For Jesus to be the *promised Saviour* and save us from our sin, He had to be able to ‘represent’ us. God required perfect obedience from us, and Jesus was able to meet that standard. We, as humans, sinned against God. But Jesus was able to die in our place as a substitute because He became one of us, a man.

- Hebrews 2:14-17 says, *“Since the children have flesh and blood, he (Jesus) too shared in their humanity ... For this reason, he had to be made like his brothers in every way ... that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.”*
- Jesus became a human like us, in order to be a substitute for us, for the purpose of saving us! To deliver people from the consequences of sin against God, he pays the penalty (death) on behalf of all who trust in Him.
- We are going to learn more about this next time.

< SLIDE 39 >

Summary - Who is Jesus?

Audience interaction: Before this lesson, who did you think Jesus was?

In this lesson we have seen that a key component of understanding Christianity is understanding who Jesus is. In particular we need to see that:

1. Jesus is the *promised Saviour* who has come to save people from the penalty for sin.
2. Jesus is *God’s Son* who has the full authority of God.
3. Jesus *became a man* in order to be able to die in our place and pay for our sins.

We either believe these things and submit to the Jesus who is King and God of this universe, or we reject Him.

Next time we are going to see what Jesus came to do and build on some of the points this lesson has introduced.

< SLIDE 40 >

Leaders note: Mention what the next session will be on and when it will be held.

< SLIDE 41 >

Leaders note: Mention the homework for next gathering (reading Mark 1-6). Also explain how the time of discussion is going to work.

< SLIDE 42 >

Discussion Questions:

1. Why should we trust the Bible and learn from it?
2. What was your understanding of who Jesus is prior to today?
3. Why is it important that Jesus is both fully God and fully man?
4. Why was a 'promised Saviour' necessary?
5. If Jesus is who He claims to be, what does that mean for my life?