

Malachi 3:1

“...I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then suddenly / the Lord you are seeking / will come to His temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come”, says the Lord / Almighty.”

Matthew 16:13-17

“When Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples; “Who do people say / the Son of Man is?” They replied; “some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But / what about you”, He asked. “Who do **you** say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by My Father in heaven.”

“Who is this Jesus?” In this morning’s Call to Worship / we proclaim him as a prophet and preacher. We also say he is a healer, servant, and friend. He is the Son of Man. He is the Son of God. He is our Redeemer and Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus is also an authority, an exorcist, a leader, an activist, justice, a revolutionary, a subversive, Master, the Good Shepherd, and thought by some, to be crazy. For many, Jesus has no relevance in their lives /or is non-existent.

In order to answer the question, one must be able to understand it.

Our source and reference for the question / are the Gospels According to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are referred to as / the Synoptic Gospels / and “see together” the life and teachings of Jesus. They basically account for the same events in Jesus’ life, but with different emphasis.

The tradition behind the Gospel According to Matthew / is one of Jewish origin, and for a Jewish audience / in proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the chosen one of God, in fulfillment of prophecies / found in the Old Testament.

The Gospel According to Mark, is considered to be the earliest of the Gospels. Tradition states / the Gospel is largely based on the accounts, experiences, and teachings of Peter. Mark also accompanied Paul on missions. This may account for Mark’s Gospel / portraying Jesus as a servant of God / and a sacrifice for humanity.

The Gospel According to Luke. His tradition is one of Hellenic, Greek-influenced, origin. One that viewed the individual / more over the collective / and one not based on strict ritual. Luke’s faith base is through Paul / who he accompanied on missions. Luke’s testament /

shows Jesus as human / and the Son of Man; full of compassion,
sympathetic toward women, the poor, the sick, sinners, and the dying.

The last of the four Gospels, the Gospel According to John, John depicts /
in-depth accounts of the Last Supper / and events leading to Jesus’
resurrection, proofing Him / as He claims, the Son of God. “That you may
believe / that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing / you
may have life in His name.” John 20:31

“Who is this Jesus?” as **healer and exorcist**”. As we review the stories,
note the emphasis on Jesus’ authority / and the faith of the afflicted,
confident assurance, belief, and hope for an outcome.

The beginning of Jesus’ healings / was in Capernaum. To a man with a
demon, Jesus was a healer and exorcist. “A man possessed by a demon /
began shouting at Jesus. “Why are you bothering us? Have You come to
destroy us demons, holy Son of God?” Jesus commanded the demon to say
no more / and to come out of the man. Amazement gripped the audience.

“What kind of new religion is this? Why, even evil spirits follow
His orders!” Mark 1:23-28/Matthew 8:14-17

Jesus is viewed as a healer to a paralyzed man.

“Four men arrived / carrying a paralyzed man / on a stretcher. They couldn’t get to Jesus through the crowd / so they lowered the man / through a hole in the roof. When Jesus saw how strongly they believed, He said to the sick man; “Son, your sins are forgiven.” and commanded him, “Pick up your stretcher / and go home, for you have been healed.” Mark 2:3-11

To a mother and her possessed child, Jesus is a healer. The twist is, neither she / nor the child are Jews. To both Jews and Gentiles / Jesus is a healer.

“A woman brought her demon-possessed / daughter to Jesus. She pleaded with Him / to release the child / from the demon’s control. But, she was a despised Gentile! Jesus told her; “First I need to help my own family / the Jews. It’s not right to take the children’s food / and throw it to the dogs.” She replied, “That’s true sir, but even the puppies under the table / are given some scraps / from the children’s plates.” Jesus said; “you have answered well.” “Go home / for the demon has left her.” Mark 7:25-29

“Who is this Jesus?” as **teacher and preacher**. The emphasis is on stories in the form of allegories, parables, and paradoxes / on the Kingdom of God, the essence of which / encompass the two great commandments. In Mark, Jesus said, “The Lord God / is the one and only God. You must love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Second, you must love others /

as much as yourself. No other commandments are greater than these". Mark
12:29-31/Matthew 22:37-39

At the synagogue in Capernaum, Jesus is seen as a preacher.

"Jesus and His companions went into the synagogue / where He preached.
The congregation was surprised at His sermon because / He spoke with
authority." Mark 1:21-22/Luke 4:32-34

The Jews at the time, and the disciples, Peter in particular, held to the
belief of the "Messiah mission", awaiting a king / who would overthrow
Roman rule / and occupation. This was not the teachings / and preaching of
Jesus. His divine mission / was a spiritual conquering. According to Luke,
Jesus said; "The Spirit of the Lord / is upon Me, He has appointed Me / to
preach the Kingdom / to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted / and to
announce that captives / shall be released, and the blind shall see. That the
downtrodden / shall be freed from their oppressors / and that God is ready /
to give blessings / to all who come to Him." Luke 4:18-19

Jesus teaches faith in God / can move mountains. In Matthew and Mark,
Jesus said; "If you only have faith / you can say to this mountain, rise up /
and fall into sea, and your command will be followed. You can
pray for anything, and if you believe / and have no doubt, it's yours.

But, when you are praying, first forgive anyone / you are holding a grudge against. So that you're Father in heaven / will forgive you." Mark 11:22-25/Matthew 17:20

"Who is this Jesus?" as **miracle-maker**. The miracles showed Jesus / having authority and control over nature. The disciples were in shock / as Jesus is seen / walking on water. "One night / the disciples were in their boat / in the middle of a lake. Jesus was on land / and saw they were in trouble, struggling against the wind and waves. In the early morning / Jesus walked on the water / out to them. When they saw Him walking along side of the boat, they screamed in terror, thinking Jesus was a ghost. He spoke to them with reassurance, climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped." Mark 6:47-52/Matt.14:22-33

Thousands witness Jesus / as a miracle-maker / when He feeds approximately 9,000 people / at two separate events while preaching.

"Late in the afternoon / His disciples came to Him and said; "Tell the people to go away / and buy themselves some food, for there is nothing to eat here." But Jesus said, "You feed them." Then / He told the crowd / to sit down in groups. Jesus took five loaves of bread / and two fish they had / and gave thanks. The disciples / passed out the food.

The crowd ate / until they were full. There were about 5,000 people at the meal.” Mark 6:35-36, 39-43

A rabbi and his daughter / see Jesus as a miracle-maker. He brings the child back to life. “A local rabbi of the synagogue / came to Jesus. “My little daughter has just died” he said; “but You / can bring her back to life again.” When Jesus arrived at the rabbi’s home / and saw the noisy crowds / He said; “Get them out, for the little girl isn’t dead, she is only sleeping.” When the crowd was finally outside, Jesus went in to the house / and took the girl by the hand. She jumped up / and was all right !” Matthew 9:18, 23-26/Mark 5:21-43/Luke 8:40-56

“Who is this Jesus?” as **friend**. Jesus is a friend to children. “Mothers brought their children to Jesus / to bless them. The disciples shooed them away, telling them not to bother Him. But when Jesus saw this, He was displeased and said; “Let the children come to Me, for the Kingdom of God / belongs to such as they. Don’t send them away! Anyone who refuses to come to God / as a little child / will never be allowed into His Kingdom.”

Mark 10:13-15

Jesus shows what it means to be a friend. He said in John; “I demand that you love one another / as much As I love you.

The greatest love is shown / when a person lays down his life / for his.
friends And, you are My friends, as I have told you everything / My
Father has told Me.” John 15:12-14

“Who is this Jesus?” as the **Son of God**. John attests the disciples saw
Jesus do many miracles / and they are recorded / so will believe /
Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing in Him / have life.

Jewish leaders see Jesus as crazy / and condemn Him. He had declared
Himself to be God. In John, Jesus said; “Your law says / that men are gods.
If the scripture, speaks of those as gods, do you call it blasphemy /when the
one sanctified / and sent into the world by the Father says, I am the Son of
God? Don’t believe Me unless I do miracles of God. But if I do, believe
them / even if you don’t believe Me.” John 10:34-38

Jesus continues, “Don’t let your heart be troubled. You are trusting God,
now trust in Me. There are many homes where My Father lives, and I am
going to prepare them / for your coming. When everything is ready, I will
come for you. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the
Father / except by me.” John 14:1-4,6-7

“Who is this Jesus?” / that He is our **Redeemer and Savior**?

There are no witnesses to Jesus' resurrection. There are various traditions / regarding resurrected and exalted Jesus Christ / appearing to women / at His empty tomb, to His disciples "on the road" / and at specific locations, and to a crowd of over 500 people.

According to Luke, Jesus said, "I, the Son of God, must suffer, die, and rise again from the dead. The message of salvation / should be taken to all nations. There is forgiveness of sins for all / who turn to Me." Luke 24:46-47

In John, Jesus said; "For God so loved the world / He gave His only Son / that anyone / who believes in Him / will have eternal life. God did not send His Son into the world / to condemn it, but to save it. There is no eternal doom / awaiting those who trust Him / to save them." John 3:16-18

Jesus continues... "Here on earth you / will have many trials / and sorrows, but cheer up, for I have overcome the world." John 16:33

"Who is this Jesus?" Was He a man? Was He fully God, both, or something in between? Even in **humor** / Jesus is many things to many people.

He talked with His hands. He had wine with every meal.

On many occasions, He used olive oil. Good arguments / Jesus was Italian.

Jesus never cut His hair. He walked around barefoot / all the time.

And, He started a new religion. Good arguments / Jesus came from
California.

The most compelling evidence of all....Jesus / was a woman.

He fed a crowd / at a moment's notice, when there was no food. He kept
trying / to get a message across / to a group of men, who just didn't get
it. And, even when Jesus was dead, He had to get up, because / there was
more work / to do.

So, "Who is this Jesus?", more specifically, "**How is Jesus to you?**" Who
do **you** say He is? You must decide, your life depends / on your answer. It's
not easy to be faithful to Jesus / when, who He is, and what He wants us to
do, runs counter to what our world / and culture has told us, all our lives. A
world / where human reasoning / and self-will / dictate over God's will. A
world / where misunderstandings / and misconceptions / lead to suspicion
and hatred. A world / where there is no direction, purpose, or meaning. A
world / where joy and contentment / are found in consuming drugs / and
alcohol.

It's not easy / to comprehend "Who is this Jesus?" His disciples struggled /
with His true nature / during His mission / of spreading God's Rule /

while in their presence, through His crucifixion, and even after His resurrection. Jesus **healed** / the physically and mentally ill. He was an **exorcist** / for the spiritually sick. He **taught and preached** / with authority. Jesus **walked on water** / and had authority over natural forces. He brought the **dead / back to life**. Jesus **fed** approximately **9,000 people** / out of almost nothing. He even **forgave sin**. Only God / can forgive sin. In Mark, Jesus said; “If you insist on saving your life, you will lose it. Only those / who throw away their lives / for My sake / and for the sake of the Kingdom of God / will know what it means / to live.” Mark 8:35

Like the disciples eventually, one must take a stand / and be committed / to what one believes. A minister friend reflects; “One cannot call Jesus **healer** / and still hold to worry / and despair. One cannot call Jesus **teacher** / and neglect / to put His truth / and wisdom in our life. One cannot call Jesus **friend** / and not turn to Him / in prayer for advice. One cannot call Jesus / the **Son of God** / and then reject His ability / to make us right with God. One cannot confess Jesus / as **Redeemer and Savior** / and not follow Him.”

How one understands / “Who is this Jesus?” / is / when one will understand / them self. Understand / what gives life meaning, purpose, joy, peace, and contentment. One does lose their life, but in return, is gifted with the grace / and salvation / of Jesus Christ eternally. Amen.

