

# WHO THEN IS JESUS... REVISITED

Luke 9:18-22

## 1 JESUS THE SUPERSTAR

In the Early Seventies, Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd-Webber wrote the musical Jesus Christ Superstar. Some regarded this as blasphemous, but it was a genuine enquiry about someone who was not going away. Jesus Christ Superstar is still showing today and historians, philosophers, and theologians still ask the question: “Jesus Christ, Superstar, do you think you’re what they say you are?”

Today many agree that Jesus was a good person. Some say he was an excellent teacher. Others say Jesus set a good example. In saying this, however, we are no different to those living in the First Century. This is why Jesus said to his disciples in Luke 9:18, “Who do the crowds say I am?” What is the latest opinion? In v19, the disciples said, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others that one of the prophets has come back to life.” This is what Herod heard in Luke 9:7-8. Most people agree that Jesus was a remarkable man, but he is more than this. Jesus is God in the flesh. This is where many get it wrong. It is reflected in the chorus of Jesus Christ Superstar... do you think you’re what they say you are?”

Many today affirm that Jesus was an historical figure and a good teacher. This, however, is not the answer Jesus was looking for when he asked about his identity. Jesus is more than a resurrected prophet. Jesus is more than a teacher. Jesus is more than a good person. Jesus is God in the flesh, and we need to listen to him and follow him. This leads to a further point in seeking to answer the question, “Who then is Jesus?” To answer this, we need to go beyond the Jesus of popular opinion to the Jesus revealed in Scripture. In a word, we need to see...

## 2 JESUS UNPLUGGED

Today, some music is created with the help of electronic devices. To counter this, some musicians appear unplugged or without artificial sounds. We then hear the real artist. Having followed him for three years, the disciples saw Jesus unplugged. They saw the real person. So when Jesus turned from popular opinion and said to his disciples, “Who do you say I am?” Peter said in v20, “You are the Christ of God.” Christ is the Greek word for the Hebrew idea of Messiah or Anointed One. Christ is the one spoken about in the Old Testament who would save his people from their sins. As the Christ of God, Jesus is the fulfilment of all the Old Testament prophecies about Messiah.

In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed by pouring oil on them. An example of this is Isaiah 61:1. Speaking about the coming Christ or anointed one. It says, “The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.” This was fulfilled in Jesus. Acts 10:38 says, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.”

We can hear about Jesus on the street, at work, and through the media, but if we want the authentic Jesus, we need to look elsewhere. In Matthew’s account of Peter’s declaration that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus said, “This was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 16:16–17). To discover Jesus unplugged, we too need God’s revelation. We need God’s revelation by his Spirit. This is...

### 3 JESUS LIVE AND INTERACTIVE

When we attend a live performance, we engage with the artists. It is one thing to hear what people say about Jesus and it is another thing to read about Jesus in the Bible, but there is nothing better than experiencing Jesus for ourselves. This is what happens when Jesus appears live and interactive.

In v21, Jesus told his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. He said this because without spiritual insight, people would not understand. Jesus had a mission and a purpose to fulfil. He said in v22, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law. He then must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” This is why he came. When his mission and purpose was complete, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit so that we could experience the living Christ for ourselves. 2 Peter 1:4 says, “God has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them we may participate in the divine nature.” This is Jesus—appearing live and interactive in us.

In v20, Jesus asked, “What about you... who do you say I am.” Who is Jesus and where is he appearing today... tonight... this week? Where is Jesus appearing so that people can see him live and interactive? When this happens, like at any live show, people are drawn into the experience. To this end, 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 says, “We are a letter... known and read by everybody. We are a letter from Christ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God.”

**The following may help us reflect further on the message**  
we use these points as a discussion guide at our fellowship groups

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1. This is the second time we have looked at the identity of Jesus within a couple of weeks. *How has your witness developed since the last time we asked who is Jesus (Luke 9:7-9)? Have you had any opportunities to talk about the Lord?*
2. One name says it all. Why is the name Jesus still recognised today, and how can we make more use of this?
3. What did Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd-Webber mean when they wrote the words: "Jesus Christ, superstar, do you think you're what they say you are?" *How can we respond to this today?*
4. Discuss the following: "Many today affirm that Jesus was an historical figure and as a good teacher, but this is not the answer Jesus was looking for when he asked about his identity in Luke 9:18."
5. How can we listen to Jesus unplugged today? *Matthew 16:16-18 may help in your discussion.*
6. How do you understand Jesus' role as Messiah (prophet, priest, and king)? How should this affect us today? *See Isaiah 61:1 and Acts 10:38.*
7. How do you understand Psalm 119:99? *How does this compare with Jesus' comments about Peter's confession in Matthew 16:17?*
8. What is the difference between Jesus Unplugged, and Jesus appearing live and interactive at a venue near you? *2 Peter 1:3-4 may help in your discussion.*
9. How should we understand and apply Luke 9:21-22? *How does this fit in with 2 Corinthians 3:2-3?*