



*Why*  
JESUS



Touching Lives  
with James Merritt

# WHY JESUS?

## SERIES OVERVIEW

A valid question that every Christian should have to answer, and every non-Christian should want to be answered is this one: “Why Jesus?” Why is it that every other spiritual, mystical, and religious leader who has ever lived should be rejected in favor of following only Jesus Christ? Honestly, the question is not just, “Why Jesus?” but, “Why Jesus only and why Jesus alone?” Over the course of the next three weeks, we are going to be exploring the answer to these questions, because the answer is in fact really easy. There are three things about Jesus that, if true, differentiate him not only from every other religious and spiritual figure who has ever lived, but also sets him apart from every other person who has ever lived. The three things are: His life, His death, and His resurrection. If what we believe about Jesus true based on what He said and what Scripture says about Him, then we can say He lived an unequalled life, He died a unique death, and He experienced an unmatched resurrection. Those three things are the answers to why Jesus is the only One worth following, worth worshipping, and worth believing.

## SERIES VERSES

*Hebrews 4:15-16*

*1 Peter 3:18*

*Acts 13:29-39*

# WHY JESUS?

## PART 1: Just Perfect

Hebrews 4:15-16

### OVERVIEW

How often have you ever slipped up, made a mistake, blew it, and said, "Well nobody's perfect!" Well, that statement technically isn't true. There is one person who was perfect in every area of life. From His thoughts, to His words, to His deeds, He was absolutely and pristinely perfect. However, if Jesus wasn't perfect, if He wasn't sinless and instead sinned like everyone else, then several things would be true of Him. If this He wasn't perfect, then Jesus was not who He said He was. If He was not who He said He was, then He could not have done what He said He did. If He didn't do what He said He did, then there is no hope for anyone being delivered from sin and having a relationship with God. If Jesus sinned, He couldn't be the Savior. And if He is not the Savior, we cannot have salvation.

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### KEY POINTS

#### 1. Jesus Confronted Temptation Like Us

The author of Hebrews is taking a look-back at the life of Jesus, and he says this, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are..." (Hebrews 4:15). There is one thing that Jesus does have in common, not only with every religious leader who has ever lived, but every person who has ever lived, and that is that He was a human being.

One of the reasons He became a human being was so that He could experience what being a human being is like, and that means He experienced temptation. No human being is above temptation, and neither was Jesus. This is why He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. When Jesus came to earth, He got in the game. He played by the rules. He never pulled rank, and He never cheated. He used the same thing to overcome temptation that we have at our disposal - the Scripture and surrender to God. He confronted temptation just like we do, only He confronted it perfectly.

#### 2. Jesus Conquered Temptation For Us

Now the author of Hebrews presents us with an unparalleled claim for anyone who has ever lived. He tells us that Jesus not only faced temptation like us, but He did so without sinning. TO understand the statement that the author is using when he says, "without sin," you've got to understand what sin does to all of us. Sin affects us in four ways. It affects who we are. It affects what we do. It affects the way we think, and it affects us where we fail.

We are all affected by sin in each of these ways on a daily basis. But thankfully, Jesus overcame sin. The author of Hebrews tells us this when he says that Jesus was, "without sin," and the amazing thing is that it's not just the author of Hebrews who made this claim. His family, His friends, and His foes all said the same thing. In every way you could imagine, Jesus was just perfect. Every time He spoke, it was the right thing. Every time He said something, it was the right thing. Every time He did something, it was the right thing.

# WHY JESUS?

## PART 1: Just Perfect

*Hebrews 4:15-16*

### 3. Jesus Combats Temptation With Us

Now, how does all of this information help us? Jesus was sinless, but we are not. He fought temptation and beat it, but sometimes we don't. How can a sinless savior help a sinful person like me live the life I ought to live? The answer is found in verse 16 of the fourth chapter of Hebrews. "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Because Jesus was the sinless Son of God, He has opened the door for us to go into the very throne room of God anytime we want to. We will find exactly what we need when we face temptation and beat it, or when we face temptation and fall short. When temptation beats us, we need mercy for God to forgive and cover our sin. When we face temptation in the future, we need grace to strengthen us to keep us from sinning. As a child of God, you can be confident that you always have access to God's grace and mercy through Jesus Christ. He came to not only gain victory over sin for Himself. He came to give us victory over sin as well.

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### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you feel alone when you're being tempted? If so, what is something you can do to remind yourself that Jesus is always with you to help you combat your temptation?
2. Have you talked to the Lord recently about the temptations you're facing? He can sympathize with what you're feeling because He endured the same temptation. Spend time talking to Him today as you seek comfort in the midst of your temptation.

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# WHY JESUS?

## PART 2: Trading Places

1 Peter 3:18

### OVERVIEW

Last week, we talked about how Jesus lived an unequalled life. He is the only person who ever claimed to be without any sin, and who never had anyone convict Him of sin. Today, we are going to look at His death, because He died a unique death. Death itself is not unique, rather it is universal and inevitable. Even the way Jesus died by crucifixion was not unique. Thirty thousand Jews were crucified, and He was just one of them. But why He died and what His death accomplished was very unique. The reason He died and the result of His death is unlike any other death in the history of the world, past, present, or future. So, as we are answering the question, "Why should everyone only look to Jesus to have a relationship with God?", we must understand that it is not just the way He lived, but also why He died that helps answer that question.

### KEY POINTS

#### 1. I Look To Jesus As My Permanent Sacrifice

Jesus died for sins, not His sins, but our sins. He didn't die as a martyr. He didn't die as an example. He died as a sacrifice. As Peter describes Christ's death, we must focus the operative word in verse 18, "once." Jesus suffered once. He died once, because that's all it took. When Jesus sacrificed Himself for our sins, it was the last and final sacrifice that ever needed to be made on behalf of the human race.

#### 2. I Look To Jesus As My Perfect Substitute

Jesus died, but He didn't just die for Himself. He died for you, for me, and for anyone who has ever lived or ever will live. 1 Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous." If death results from sin and Jesus never sinned, the only explanation for His death is that He died on our behalf, in our place, for our sins. He was our substitute.

In this case, or any case, not just any substitute will do. We must have a perfect substitute. Only the righteous can die for the unrighteous, the just for the unjust, the sinless for the sinner, the perfect for the imperfect.

#### 3. I Look To Jesus As My Personal Savior

Why do you need a permanent sacrifice and a perfect substitute? Well, Peter tells us it is so we can connect with God. We need someone to bring us to God, because on our own, in our own sin, we cannot come to God. We can't get to God by ourselves.

The word used for "to bring" describes someone who has the authority to introduce you to a king or ruler and to give you access to him. It is an official term, just as now you can't just walk into the office of a king, president, or ruler. You not only have to be invited, but you have to have access. You

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# WHY JESUS?

## PART 2: Trading Places

*1 Peter 3:18*

have to have someone who possesses the authority to take you into that person's presence.

We don't have the moral authority or the spiritual ability to go into the presence of a Holy God on our own. Somebody must bring us to Him, and the only one who can do that is a personal Savior who has earned that position by being our permanent sacrifice and our perfect substitute.

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### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you believe Jesus was actually the perfect sacrifice, or have you ever doubted the total perfection of Jesus?
2. Do you struggle with thinking you have to perfect in your own strength for God to accept you? Remember that Jesus was perfect so you don't have to be.

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# WHY JESUS?

## PART 3: Back From The Dead

Acts 13:29-39

### OVERVIEW

After He lived a perfect, sinless life, Jesus Christ died on a cross. He claimed to have died for the sins of the world, but technically anybody can make that claim. If He did die for the sins of the world, His death was unlike any other death. The clincher, though, is the belief that He rose from the dead. If those three things are true regarding His life, death, and resurrection, then Jesus in fact did live an unequalled life, died a unique death, and experienced an unmatched resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ makes Him different and superior to every other person who has ever lived. Everyone in history has died and stayed dead except Jesus. Every other religion of the world can point to a founder and then point to a grave or a tomb, but only Christians can point to an empty tomb and say, "Our founder is alive!"

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### KEY POINTS

#### 1. We Have An Empty Tomb

The empty tomb alone does not prove that Jesus rose from the dead. But if eleven men who all denied Jesus just three days earlier to suddenly begin to preach that Jesus had been raised from the dead while He was in the tomb, that would have been both foolish and stupid.

In other words, if like every other grave and every other tomb, the body was still there, then to talk about a resurrection was preposterous. But, if the tomb was empty, then the resurrection is at least plausible, and when you examine it, not just plausible, but the best explanation for an unoccupied tomb. People were reconciled to the fact that He was gone, never to be seen again on this earth, but the empty tomb changed everything.

#### 2. We Read Eyewitness Testimonies

There are two book ends to the evidence of Jesus' resurrection. There is the empty tomb, but there is also eye-witness testimony. These two facts form a resurrection-shaped dent in history. Any attorney will tell you that the most powerful evidence you can present in any case is a credible, legitimate, eye-witness testimony. Even better, if you can have several eyewitnesses that corroborate each other's story, you're in a great spot.

If you combine the empty tomb with the eyewitness testimony, this is what moves even skeptics to take a serious look at exactly what happened. No one disputes the fact that significant numbers of men and women claimed to be eyewitnesses to the risen Jesus, which is attested to by practically every one of the 27 books in the New Testament.

#### 3. We Experience An Eternal Transformation

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not just a theological doctrine that Christians believe. It is extremely relevant to your life, because you will never find forgiveness of sins and you will never truly be free from guilt

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## PART 3: Back From The Dead

*Acts 13:29-39*

until you meet the risen Jesus. Through Him, Paul says that we have the forgiveness of sins, and through Him we are set free from the guilt of every sin. We experience the eternal transformation that takes place in the life of everyone who comes to the risen Jesus.

Jesus lived a sinless life. Because He lived a sinless life, He died an atoning death. To prove that He lived a perfect life and died an atoning death, He came back from the dead. Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins, but the empty tomb is proof that God cashed the check. He accepted the payment. He cancelled our sin debt. He set us free from the guilt of all sin. Therefore, we can have a relationship with Him and live in victory because of Jesus, and only Jesus.

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### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Have you taken the time to read through the eyewitness accounts of Jesus' resurrection? If not, spend some time reading those accounts this week and consider the different sources and details of each account.
  
2. Have you experienced the eternal transformation that comes with acknowledging Jesus as your Savior and living your life surrendered to Him? If not, I would encourage to stop everything right now, and pray and ask the Lord to forgive you of your sins. Thank Him for the sacrifice He made to save you, and tell Him you want to surrender to His will and follow Him for the rest of your days.

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BY JAMES MERRITT

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