

Who Is Jesus

by Billy Graham

Billy Graham's sermon 'Who Is Jesus?' explores the identity, authority, and power of Jesus Christ, and emphasizes the importance of a personal relationship with Him for salvation.

Scripture: Luke 11:29

Topics: "Identity of Christ", "Decision for Christ"

Description

Billy Graham delivers a powerful sermon titled 'Who Is Jesus,' emphasizing the significance of making a decision about Christ. He highlights that encountering Jesus is a life-altering moment, whether one accepts or rejects Him, and stresses that Jesus is not just a historical figure but the incarnate Son of God who offers forgiveness and transformation. Graham challenges the audience to consider their personal response to Jesus, urging them to recognize His authority and the necessity of faith in Him for salvation. He concludes by inviting individuals to publicly accept Christ, affirming that true change comes from a relationship with Him.

Transcript

I'm going to ask that we all bow our heads in prayer! Every head bowed - and every eye closed. For many thousands of people here today - this will be - an hour of decision. And you will never be the same, today. Even if you refuse Christ, you'll never be the same today. Once you've faced Him - once you've heard the gospel - and rejected it, you can never be the same. It says that when the rich young ruler rejected Christ, he turned away grieved! Emotionally disturbed. Because when you reject the claims of Christ - that's a very serious thing! It will be an hour of decision for many of you who will receive Him today. Your life will never be the same. Your home will never be the same. So let's listen carefully and prayerfully today - and reverently today - to the message of the Word of God. Shall we pray? "Our Father, we thank thee for this love of God! That reaches around the world. And engulfs all of mankind. Thou dost love the Russians and the Chinese, as much as Thou dost love the British, all the Americans, and the Africans. Thou dost love the whole world! Thou didn't send Thy Son to die for the whole world. And we're all included in Thy redemption plan! And we thank Thee in this hour of history, we can stand and proclaim good news! That God is love! And that God is willing to forgive. We pray that many this day will receive that message - accept it and act upon it and live by it. For we ask it in His name, amen!"

We've been having a marvelous time here in Chicago, I think Cliff has already told you how big this building is. There's no indoor arena in the world except for the Astrodome in Houston, Texas, that's been

bigger than this! And here, today - thousands of people - just about filled to capacity today! As it has been almost every night - during this crusade, except I think the opening night. But we've had gigantic crowds that have come here to this great arena. Night after night. And we've seen thousands of people coming forward - to make their commitment to Christ. Now today, I want you to turn with me to Luke's gospel - the 11th chapter. The 11th chapter of Luke's gospel - beginning with verse 29. I hope you have your Bibles. How many of you have a Bible today? Lift them up. Look at the Bibles - thousands of them everywhere!

Luke 11:29-32

29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

KJV

Now, ancient Israel - wanted Jesus - to do something sensational. To prove that He was really the Son of God. But Jesus is saying, in this passage - "You're seeking for a sign! Alright! I'll give you a sign! I AM the sign!" And Jesus was saying, that the people of Jonah's day - listened to the message of God and repented. And they're going to rise up in the Judgment as witnesses against the people of Jesus' day, that rejected Him! He said the queen of the south recognized the wisdom of Solomon. But He said, "In me, you have a greater wisdom, than all of the wisdom of Solomon!" He said, "You're blind. You cannot see the truth. You're deaf and you cannot hear the truth!" He said, "I am the truth! I'm the light of the world! I'm the sign! Now, when you face Jesus - what is your reaction? When you're confronted with Jesus Christ, what is your reaction? The reaction of the scribes and Pharisees was one of hostility. The people of Nineveh's day were humbled! And repented, when they faced and confronted God. And the question that we all ask today is this question: "What think ye of Christ?"

There's a rock opera, at the moment, called, "Jesus Christ, the Superstar." All around the country, thousands of young people are talking about Christ. They can't escape Him. There's a Broadway play right now, entitled, "Godspell." A musical version of St. Matthew's gospel. There's a new movie right now - called, "Brother John" - in which Sydney Porcia, plays Jesus Christ, in the form of an Alabama black man. The front cover of Life Magazine, a few weeks ago - read "Jesus Christ, Superstar."

And this opera from England, was confronting young people with one question - "Who is Jesus Christ?" An 87 minute electronic probe into the life of Jesus. Who is Jesus? And the opera concludes, with the voice of Judas, coming back from the dead and still questioning who Jesus is. "Don't get me wrong!", says Judas, in the opera. "I only want to know!" And then the haunting chorus followed: "Jesus Christ, Superstar!" Do you think you're what they say you are?! Jesus Christ, do you think you are what they say you are?!

It's interesting to me that in 1971, the plays, the books - the operas - the movies about Jesus. Our generation cannot escape Jesus! And when Good News For Modern Man - translation of the New

Testament, by the Society, they sold 25 million copies. We cannot escape Jesus! I've never heard of an opera or a play, even of a play - about Buddha! Or Mohammed! Or Gandhi! But our generation has become hung up on Jesus! Young people are talking about Jesus! He's the subject of conversation, today, on the campus - in the high schools!

Everywhere! Young people are discussing Jesus Christ. And they're asking the question, "Who is He? Who is this Jesus?" We cannot escape. Do you remember that day when Saul, who was persecuting Christians - was on the road to Damascus? And the blinding light came, and he fell down. And the first question he asked, was "Who art Thou, Lord?" The question young people on the campus are asking today is, "Who art Thou, Lord?" Who is Jesus? Why can we not escape Him? Why is He in our conscience and in our mind?

So that our plays, and our poems, and our operas are about Him? Is He just a revolutionary hero? Why is He something more? He only lived 33 years! He never traveled more than a hundred miles! He never had a formal education! And yet, 2000 years later an entire generation - is talking about Jesus Christ. Some say that He was a madman. Some of the people of His day said that He was a maniac! Was He? There were others who said He was revolutionary. He'd come to lead a revolution.

Why was He a revolutionary? In the sense that He changed men's lives, He was! But He never led a revolution against Rome! He never led a revolution against the existing authorities, as a matter of fact - some tried to get Him to . And when they found out that He was building a spiritual kingdom, they were no longer interested in Him! And when they tried to tempt Him about that, He said, "Bring thy coin!" And He said, "Who's picture is on that coin?" They said, "Caesar." He said, "Alright, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God, the things that are God's!"

And the scriptures say they stopped asking Him questions. They didn't know how to answer that! Or was Jesus an establishment man? Some people say that He represented the "Status Quo." Some people say that Jesus Christ is the one upon what western culture has been built. That America is really Jesus' organisation upon the earth. Well, I tell you! If His organisation depends on our bureaucracy built in Washington, we're finished! There's not much hope for the world! Jesus Christ is not the establishment's Christ!

He's building another kingdom! He's building an eternal kingdom! And then there are some people who say that He was the first hippy! They say He had long hair, and went around with His disciples in a commune. You know, we don't actually know what He looked like! We don't know whether He had a long beard, or not. Those are just pictures that artists have painted! We think He did. We don't know whether He had long hair or not! He probably did, because the people of that day - that was the style.

But we don't know. We don't have a picture of Jesus, and God did that purposely! So that we would not be worshiping an image! Because God is a Spirit! And must be worshiped in Spirit. And then, there were people who said that He was deliberately evil - that He was an evil man! That He was a devil. What was He? That's the question! "Jesus, Christ, who are you?" Who is Jesus? We can't escape Him! We try to run from Him, but there He is! He keeps popping up everywhere! Our greatest philosophers write about Him.

Our greatest historians write about Him. Our greatest poems and plays are about Him. Our greatest architecture is about Him - even in the Soviet Union, you go to the Kremlin! I've been in the Kremlin, and it's all filled with pictures and paintings of Jesus. You go anywhere in the Soviet Union, and you'll see images, art and much of the music has to do with Jesus! They can't escape Him! Well, we know some

things about Him. We know He was a man. Jesus was completely human. He was representative of man, because the Bible says, "He was identified - He was numbered with the transgressors."

We know He got hungry - He got thirsty- we know He got tired. We know that He had the joys of friendship. We know that He wept at the tomb of a dead loved one! We know that He had all of the characteristics of a man! And yet, very interestingly - the Bible says, that He never committed a sin! In fact, He stood in front of the people of His generation, and He said, "I've never committed a sin." He said, "Have you - any of my neighbors have seen me commit a sin?" They couldn't say a thing!

And wouldn't that be something - for a man to come along - 33 years of age and say, "Who of you have ever seen me commit a sin?" Well, I tell you, if I said that, all of my team would jump up and say, "I have!" My wife's here. All of us are sinners, but Jesus was tempted in every point, like as we are. He went through every temptation we've been through. There isn't a trial or a testing, or a temptation that Jesus has not been through before you! And He resisted them all and overcame them all!

Everyone! He was a man, just like you. But He was MORE than that. He claimed to be the unique, only begotten - INCARNATE Son of God. In fact, He claimed pre-existence. The scriptures say, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was WITH GOD." Before time began, He existed. He said, "Before Abraham was, I am. I am in eternal existence!" No wonder they got angry! No wonder they threw stones at Him - no wonder they tried to kill Him. And no wonder that they did eventually crucify Him!

He stood and said, "I am God!" Was He? Was He who He claimed to be? The Son of the Living God? One day, He asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "Well, some of them say that you're John the Baptist come, or you're Jeremiah, or Elijah." He said, "I'm not really interested in what the people say. I'm interested, Peter, in what you say!" "What do you say?" Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God!" And Jesus said, "Peter, you've done well!

You've passed your examination. But Peter, those are not your thoughts. Those thoughts came from God! It has been revealed to you by God!" Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of the Living God! And you know, at His incarnation, or His birth - that was not His birth! That wasn't the beginning - that wasn't the origin of Jesus! That was the beginning of His incarnation. Because He has always existed! From everlasting to everlasting, He is God - the Bible says! "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

In other words, the logos - the Word of God - the eternal God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, and lived like a man among us! That's what the Bible teaches. And when you come to Jesus Christ, you have to accept that!

He wasn't just another revolutionary. He wasn't just another hippy! He was not just another great man! He was GOD - IN THE FLESH! And all the ethics that He taught - "never a man spake like that man!" When you get hit on one side, He said to turn the other cheek! He never said what to do after that. But He did say "Forgive 70 times 7!" Count that up! How about all the little irritations from your wife? Or your husband? Seventy times seven, you forgive! My wife once said, "The secret of a happy marriage, is two good forgivers!" And that's what it is. Two good forgivers - people that can forgive each other. Jesus taught that we have to forgive. He taught a revolution - in the way that we are to live. He taught us that it wasn't just our outward actions that God judges, but it's the inward thoughts and the intents. He said, Moses said, that in the 10 commandments, He said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I tell you, that if you even look on a woman to lust after her, you've already committed it! He said, "Moses said, Thou shalt not murder. But I tell you, if you have hate in your heart without cause, you're already guilty!" He lifted

man's ethics to the highest plane! And demanded that we live that kind of life! He, Himself, lived that kind of life. And the scriptures say that He judges the inside. The Internal General of the USA once said, the other day, that America is more imperiled from within, than without. And so are you here, today, in your personal life. David said, "In sin did my mother conceive me." Jesus said, "Out of the heart, proceeds evil thoughts and murders and adulteries and thefts and blasphemies." All the evil in the world comes from the heart! That's got to be changed! And that's why Jesus said, "You must be born again - you must be converted." You must have a new beginning, and He can do it. How do you explain Jesus? "Jesus Christ, are you what you say you are?"

You know, they only brought three charges against Him, to crucify Him. One: They said, "This man said He loves sinners!" That was one charge. The 2nd: They said, "He healed on the Sabbath Day." And the 3rd: "He claimed to be the Son of God." Was He the Son of God? Look at His authority! Jesus came unto them and spake unto them, saying, "ALL AUTHORITY HAS BEEN GIVEN UNTO ME." I know one thing. He forgave sin, and no prophet ever did that! Jesus, Himself, FORGAVE SINS! He said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" I know that He had authority over nature. One day - one night, He was in a storm. The lightning was flashing - the thunder was roaring. The sea was raging. The wind was blowing. The disciples were afraid. And Jesus was asleep in the boat. And He stood up in the boat, and He said, "Peace be still!" The lightning quit it's flashing, and the thunder quit it's roaring. And the rain ceased to fall, and the wind quieted down, and the sea quieted down, and nature obeyed Him! And our young people believe that today - because one of the top tunes today, is , "Put Your Hand in The Hand of the One Who Calmed the Sea." He calmed the sea! He had power over nature. I was flying, and Cliff Barrows and some of us - some time ago. I think we met a typhoon, leaving the Philippines. And just before we got out of the typhoon, I was called by the captain of the plane and invited to sit up front with him. And it was fairly smooth. We had a lot of rain and all - it wasn't too rough. But all of a sudden, the plane hit something - it seemed to me that it hit a wall! It jolted and jerked and quivered and then it went up and down for 2 minutes. And then, all of a sudden, we plunged out into brilliant sunshine - into smooth air! And the captain turned to me, with the perspiration coming down his face. He said, "You know, that was God telling us that there's something up there that is more powerful than this airplane!"

But Jesus could take a storm like that, and turn it around! He could take the lightning, and throw it back in the cloud! He has power over nature - why? Because He's the God of nature! Those are His laws - they obey Him! He had authority over disease. I read the other day, where Motsa Dung (Spell?) in China has claimed to have cured 8% all the deaf people in China. And one of those men that came back on the ping pong team said that Motsa Dung is the Jesus Christ of China, today. They talk about personality cult - it looks to me like they have quite a personality there! But Jesus did make the blind to see! He made the deaf to hear! He made the dumb to talk! He raised the dead! According to the record. He had authority over the demons. You say, "Billy, do you believe in demons?" I surely do! And Jesus confronted demons, time after time - and He could cast them out! And people that were insane, under the powers of demons would regain their sanity! And then, look at the death He died. Did ever a man die, like Jesus? The lightning flashed, and the thunder roared, and the earth began to shake. And even the soldiers confessed that " This must be the Son of God!" Anyone that can see Jesus on that cross, and not be touched - has a heart of stone. They first took off His clothes. Then they took long leather thongs, with steel pellets or lead - on the end, and beat Him across the back, until He could hardly stand up. Then they put a crown of thorns on His brow, and His face was bleeding. And they laughed at Him and spit on Him, and they mocked Him. And with one snap of His fingers 72 thousand angels had already drawn their swords - ready to come to His rescue - and wipe this planet out of existence, and the universe. And Jesus said, "No! To

this end was I born! And He dragged and lifted and hauled that cross. And don't you black ever forget one thing - the man that helped Jesus carry that cross was a black man! And don't ever forget another thing - Jesus belongs to Africa! As much as He does to Europe and Asia. He was born in that part of the world that touches Africa and Asia and Europe. And Jesus was not a white man, like me. Nor was He as black as some of you. We don't know the color of His skin, but it must have been a dark color, like the people of His day. Because He was a man like them. Don't ever say, "It's a white man's religion!" Or, "A black man's religion!" It's a world religion! He belongs to the world!

When He died on that cross, and they nailed Him - they put the nails in His hands. And do you know what He said? He said, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do! Forgive them." Could you forgive somebody that's putting nails in your hands,, and you know that you didn't deserve it? He didn't squirm, He didn't yell - He didn't scream. He just took it, and said, "Lord, forgive them! They don't know what they're doing!" That's how He confronted the violence of His day. And then, on the cross, He said, "My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?"

And then, He dropped His head, and said, "It's finished!" What did He mean? He meant your plan of salvation is finished. God can now forgive you for all of your sins, because Jesus had finished God's plan for your salvation! Because you know - God knows every one of you by name! He has the hairs of your head numbered. God looks upon you as though you were the only person in the whole universe! He sees you - and you alone. And on that cross, Jesus had the capacity to think of you!

And He loved you enough to stay on the cross. Was there ever such love as that?! When He could have been rescued, and been taken back to heaven to sit on His throne. But He didn't. He said, "No!" I'm doing it for the joy that is set before Me! Because He saw that He would be raised from the dead. He saw that there would be a gathering in the generations to come - of a people who would come for His name - that would make up His body (church body). He saw the day when we will reign with Him in His kingdom!

Yes, they laid Him away in a tomb. And that's where "Jesus Christ Superstar" leaves Him! But out in Kansas City, some people got a hold of the rock opera, and they carried it right on to the next step - the resurrection. And if you don't have the resurrection - you don't have any gospel! Jesus Christ is alive! And when they went out to the tomb, that morning - they heard the greatest news the world has ever known! "He is not here! He is risen! He is alive today. And the thing that inspired the disciples to turn the world upside down, in their day, was the resurrection!

They went everywhere, declaring that Jesus is alive! You know, some of us Christians live as though Jesus is dead! He's not dead! Oh you're going through your troubles and trials, your temptations and your testings and your pressures. And you're under Satanic attack all of the time, constantly. You know, I think that in many ways - in some ways - it's easier not to be a Christian in this world, because the devil may leave you alone! The moment you receive Christ as your Savior, you're in for it!

Unless you live on your knees, and live on the scriptures, and keep your guard up. And have your spiritual armor on at all times. Because if you let down for one day as a Christian, you're in trouble! The moment you receive Christ - you see, all the world is going this way (the wrong way) you start around and turn against the tide, as a Christian. And that's hard. But you know, it's hard to be a sinner, too - the older you get, because the Bible said, "The way of the transgressor is hard."

I watch - sometimes - the programs on television, where they have crime. I have never in my life seen criminals work so hard for the money they get! It looks to me like they could get a legitimate business and

have a much easier time - to get their money! They work at it! That is, according to the scrip, and I'm sure they do in real life. Jesus Christ is alive, and if He's not risen from the dead - if He's not alive - then, there's no such thing as Christianity - "We're yet in all of our sins!", Paul said.

And the whole thing's a farce - forget it! And then the people that have received Christ - what has happened to them? We had a fellow here, the other night, that was a Black Panther leader. He said that he thought that he could change the world, through the Black Panther movement. Until he said he met Jesus! And he said, Jesus changed His life, and took all of the hate out! "Now," he said, "I believe the world can be changed, but I believe it can be done with Jesus' power!" That's it!

Jesus' power! Coming into our hearts! You know, if I had no proof whatsoever - no scientific proof that Jesus ever lived, I still would trust Him. Because of what He's done for me! The joy, and the peace, and the security and the love that He's given to me - His grace - that is mine, today. And then, the satisfaction that He gives to those who've trusted in Him.

"Who art Thou, Lord? Jesus Christ, are you who they say you are?" This is the question that everyone of you today, are going to have to answer. Who is Jesus? If Jesus claimed to be God, knowing He wasn't God, then He's a liar! And we will have to say, "Jesus, you're a liar! You're a fraud and a hoax and the biggest fraud in the history of the human race!" Or, if Jesus thought He was God, and did not know the difference - then, He desperately needed mental help - He needed several psychiatrists. The 3rd alternative is, that He was who He claims to be - God in the flesh! I believe the evidence is overwhelming, that He is who He claims to be! The Son of the Living God. But I cannot prove it scientifically. But I can prove it by the lives that He transforms every day! I can prove it, because in my heart, I don't say, "I think - I hope!" I say, "I know! And you know, there's another element in our lives that we don't think much about, and that's the element of faith. You think of the faith that you have to have every day. You have to have faith that your wife didn't put poison in your coffee, this morning. You have to have faith in her. She might have felt like it, but she didn't! You have to have faith in the bank, when you write a check and sign it and you have money in the bank. You have to have faith that the bank's going to pay it! You have to have faith in the government. When you pull out a dollar bill, and I know it's shrinking (in value). But you have faith that the back of it is a dollar! That people will accept it as money! Everything we do is by faith. Now, for example, when I come upon a hill. And I live in the mountains of North Carolina, and we have a lot of hills. I don't stop my car before we get to the crest of a hill, and get out walk to it and see if somebody's coming up on it on the wrong side. I have faith that the drivers on the other side are going to stay on their side. Faith, faith, faith - everything! That chair - have you ever sat in that chair before? I bet you didn't pick it up and examine it, and put your hands on it to see if it would hold you! By faith, you just sat down in it! You had faith that people wouldn't build a chair that wouldn't hold you. Everything we do is by faith! Alright - take the same faith - put it in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and you will know who Jesus is! You accept Him by faith! And He comes into your life and into your heart, and you KNOW that He's who He claims to be!

On that Damascus road, that I referred to a moment ago - the apostle Paul said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And then, Paul asked Him another question. Paul said, "What do you want me to do, Lord?" And Jesus said, "Arise, and go!" I'm asking you today, to rise and come to Him. Now, some of you can ridicule. Some of you can reject Him. Some can just put it off, and say, "I'm going to wait until another time!" Or, you can accept Him, as your Lord, and your Savior, and your Master and the Son of God. And He will come into your heart, and forgive your sins, and change your life. "Jesus Christ Superstar!" Judas: "Don't get me wrong, I only want to know!" he said. And the haunting chorus, "Jesus, Christ Superstar - do you think You

are what they say You are?" YES! And more! Ten thousand times more - then two men in England ever put into those lyrics - IS Jesus Christ! The Son of God. And you are asked today, to receive Him! In fact, if you're going to go to heaven, the Bible teaches YOU HAVE TO RECEIVE HIM. If you're going to have your sins forgiven, you HAVE TO RECEIVE HIM. And I'm going to ask you to do it today. And I'm going to ask you to do it publicly. How do you do it? I'm going to ask hundreds of you to get up out of your seats, right now. And stand in front of this platform, quietly and reverently, and say, "I want Christ in my heart! I want Him to forgive my sins. I want to know I'm going to heaven. I want Him to change my life. I receive Him as my Lord and Savior!"

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