

# JESUS of Nazareth



The greatest figure in the history of the world – unique and unparalleled

*Dear Andrew,\**

Today, I am writing to you about Jesus. Naturally you know His name. Everyone knows it. But I am sure you would be interested in getting to know Jesus better. Everyone acquainted with His life's circumstances, confirm that He is the greatest figure that ever lived. Why is this?

Jesus was born in an unknown village by a hitherto unknown woman. He grew up in a different village. Already at 12 years of age He was able to hold His own with the greatest teachers and thinkers of His time. Nevertheless, He worked until 30 years of age as a carpenter. After that He traveled around Israel as an itinerant preacher for 3 ½ years.

**What impact did Jesus' life have?**

**Phillips Brooks** said: *"I am not mistaken when I say all of the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life – the life of Jesus Christ."*

**William Edward Hartpole Lecky**, an unbelieving, outstanding historian said: *"The character of Jesus has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the longest incentive in its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence, that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists."*

- › Jesus wasn't an author and yet more books have been written about Him than any other person.
- › He wasn't a historian and yet He became the central figure of history. The date on every newspaper and letter affirms this.

\* Andrew, after the biblical Andrew in John 1:40-42

- Jesus wasn't an artist and yet the greatest masterpieces of painters, sculptors and musicians have been devoted to Him.
- Jesus wasn't a lawyer and yet His law of love is the best in the world.
- Jesus wasn't a doctor and yet He was the greatest doctor, who could heal any disease.
- Jesus wasn't a psychologist and yet everyone came to Him for advice. An eminent psychologist said: *"If we were to burn all the straw among the psychological works, then what was left wouldn't be nearly enough to come close to the Sermon on the Mount."*
- Jesus wasn't married, nevertheless no one can give better advice on how to have a happy marriage than He can.

### **Why is Jesus and His successful life so unique? Why isn't there anyone with whom He could be compared?**

A Christian would answer without hesitation: Because He was God, the Son of God, who became a human. It was an exciting fact for the disciples that God became human in Jesus Christ in order to save us just as the prophecies had said centuries beforehand. You certainly remember the unparalleled miracle of the messianic prophecies. God accredited Jesus

of Nazareth with 333 identifiers. Interestingly enough not a single false messiah has ever dared to lay claim to these prophecies.

It was prophesied that Christ is '*God with us*' (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23), that He, who was born in Bethlehem, is '*from everlasting*' (Micah 5:2), and that He would be called: *Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*. (Isaiah 9:6)

### **Who did Jesus say that He was?**

He confirmed that He was the Christ, who the prophecies had heralded. (Matt. 11:1-6; Matt. 16:16-17; Luke 4:17-21; John 4:25-26 i. a.)

Jesus was asked under oath at His interrogation before the Sanhedrin:

*"Tell us if you are the Christ, the son of God!"* (Matt. 26:63-64 NKJV). Jesus answered: *"It is as you said."*

The Jews clearly understood Jesus' claim to be the matchless Son of God. Because they charged Him that as a human, He was making Himself into God. (John 10:33)

He said: *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."* (Matt. 28:18 NKJV) and *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,"* says the Lord, *"who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."* (Revelation 1:8 NKJV)

## What did eyewitnesses say about Jesus?

**John Montgomery**, historian, said: “What, then, does a historian know about Jesus Christ? He knows, first and foremost, that the New Testament documents can be relied upon to give an accurate portrait of Him.” – What do the eyewitnesses report there?

**Johannes der Täufer** testified that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God. (John 1:34) According to John, Jesus was supposed to take away the sins of the world, something that only God can do. (John 1:29)

**Petrus** declared that Jesus the Christ is the Son of the living God. (John 6:68)

**Martha**, Lazarus’ sister, testified the same thing. (John 11:27)

**Thomas**, was reluctant at first to acknowledge the fact of Christ’s resurrection, but ultimately when he stood before the living Christ: “... said to Him, My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28 NKJV)

**The apostle John** testified of Jesus’ divinity with the following words: “*This is the true God and eternal life.*” (1 John 5:20 NKJV) He calls our attention to the fact that the biblical reports have the following objective: “...but these are written 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 NKJV)

**The Roman centurion**, who was in charge of the soldiers at Jesus’ crucifixion, also testified of Jesus’ divinity. He said:

“*Truly this was the Son of God!*” (Matthew 27:54 NKJV)

**Paul** rebelled at first with all his might against Christ. He did everything he could to kill the followers of Jesus. But after his personal encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, he became a zealous disciple of Jesus and declared about Christ: “...*who is over all, the eternally blessed God.*” (Romans 9:5 NKJV) He testified of Him: “*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*” By that he means that Christ possesses all of the divine traits in full measure.

## What does history say about Jesus?

**Flavius Josephus**, the Jewish historian observed: “About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly.... He was the Christ.

And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned him to a cross, those who had first come to love him did not cease. He appeared to them spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things and a thousand other marvels about him.”

**Cornelius Tacitus** mentioned: “Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus....”

**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** recognized that: “If ever divinity appeared on this earth, then it was in the person Jesus.”

**J.-J. Rousseau** wrote: “If Socrates lived and died like a philosopher, Jesus lived and died like a god.”

**Ernest Renan**, the famous orientalist and critic, made a remarkable confession:

“No matter what the future may bring, it will never surpass Jesus.”

### What conclusions did genuine sceptics make, when they examined the facts?

**General L. Wallace** had an animated discussion with a well-known atheist about the absurdity of Christianity. Wallace decided to write a book to prove that Christianity was senseless and that Jesus Christ had never lived. For years he collected material for his book. He soon realized that Jesus Christ had really lived.

Then he came to the conclusion that Christ was more than a historical figure. When he was 50 years old, he knelt down and prayed for the first time in his life. He asked Christ to be his Lord and Savior. – With the material he had collected he then wrote the famous story Ben Hur.

**Sir William Ramsay** became famous for his research about antiquity. He was convinced that the Bible was unreliable. He was a chemist and archeologist and went to the orient to establish the truth. He remained there for 15 years. He returned as a devote Christian and wrote many books, which fostered the Christian faith and trust in the Bible.

**Frank Morison**, an English journalist, wanted to prove that Jesus’ resurrection was a myth. His research led him to the conclusion that he was dealing with facts. As a result, he became a devoted Christian.

**Prof. Dr. Cyril M. Joad**, dean of the philosophy faculty at the University of London, was also a sceptic, who was of the opinion that Jesus was only a human. He believed that there was no such thing as sin. But a dramatic change took place in his life. He now believed that sin was a reality. Two world wars had shown him that humans are sinners. He came to the realization that the only explanation for sin can be found in the word of God and that the only solution for sin was the cross of Christ. He became a diligent follower of Jesus.

**Giovanni Papini**, a famous Italian atheist, also became a devote Christian after he started to study the New Testament.

He even went on to write a book about the life of Jesus.

**Adolf Deißmann**, a great German researcher, went to the Orient to demonstrate the untrustworthiness of the Bible. Because of the facts, he also became a devoted Christian and theologian. His book, ‘Light from the Ancient East’, verifies the truthfulness of the Bible.

This list could be continued for quite a while with similar people, who couldn’t oppose the facts.

**Prof. Josh McDowell**—After the second World War he preached Christ for 27 years in more than 500 universities in 52 countries to more than 3.5 million academics and students. He wrote:

**“I didn’t find a single person, insofar as they sincerely studied the evidence, who would have contested that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Savior of the world. The evidence of Jesus’ divinity is overwhelming for every honest and unbiased seeker of truth.”**

What do you think of the following thought? Assuming that we would meet someone, who knows nothing about the Christian faith and would ask him:

### **What would you expect from God, if He came to the earth as a human?**

His answers could be as follows:

- › I would expect that God would be an exceptional type of person.
- › I would expect that as a human He would not do the slightest wrong.
- › I would expect that he would stand above the laws of nature and would perform miracles.

- › I would expect that He had a better character than everyone else.
- › I would expect that He would give the greatest teachings there ever were.
- › I would expect that He would exert an ongoing and universal influence.
- › I would expect that He could satisfy our deep desire for God.
- › I would expect that He had power over death.
- › I would expect that He would be able to help me when I asked Him.

**Jesus met all these expectations in every detail.**

### **What benefit is this all to me?**

Since Jesus lives, He is able to have an influence over our lives if we want Him to. Saul, a fierce enemy, became the greatest Christian missionary. The fearful Simon became the courageous Peter; the hotheaded John became the apostle of love.

Yes, Christ gives us life in abundance, fulfillment, forgiveness and peace. Getting to know Jesus Christ personally is the greatest enrichment of your life. Because that is the heart of the gospel. Gospel means: ‘good news’, ‘glad tidings’. It is indeed the best news for you and me, because we both need Christ.

We will talk more about this next time. Wouldn't you like to read more about Jesus in the gospels in the meantime?

Maybe you could read this letter together with some friends and discuss it or you could pass this letter on to someone else.

**Siegfried Buchholz**, a sales director, professed:

“Jesus is the most exceptional and fascinating person I have ever gotten to know.” (Hörzu)

I hope you also experience the joy of personally getting to know Jesus, the Son of God.

With warm greetings,

*Helmut*

#### **Further Letters to Andrew about Jesus Christ:**

##### **Letter to Andrew 1: Christian faith put to the test**

- › Everything hinges on answering three questions.

##### **Letter to Andrew 3: What is the main focus of the Bible?**

- › 98 % have a false perception about what the Bible wants and what the heart of its message is.

##### **Letter to Andrew 8: Prophecies about Jesus Christ**

- › Probability of fulfillment 1:1017
- › About the clothes of the crucified One: partially dividing them and partially lots were cast for them.
- › None of His bones were broken. The Roman soldiers ignored the command and did what had been foretold, without knowing it.
- › Betrayal for 30 pieces of silver along with eight other details.