



# WHO IS JESUS?

## LESSON 2: Jesus Shows the Way

### Lesson Focus:

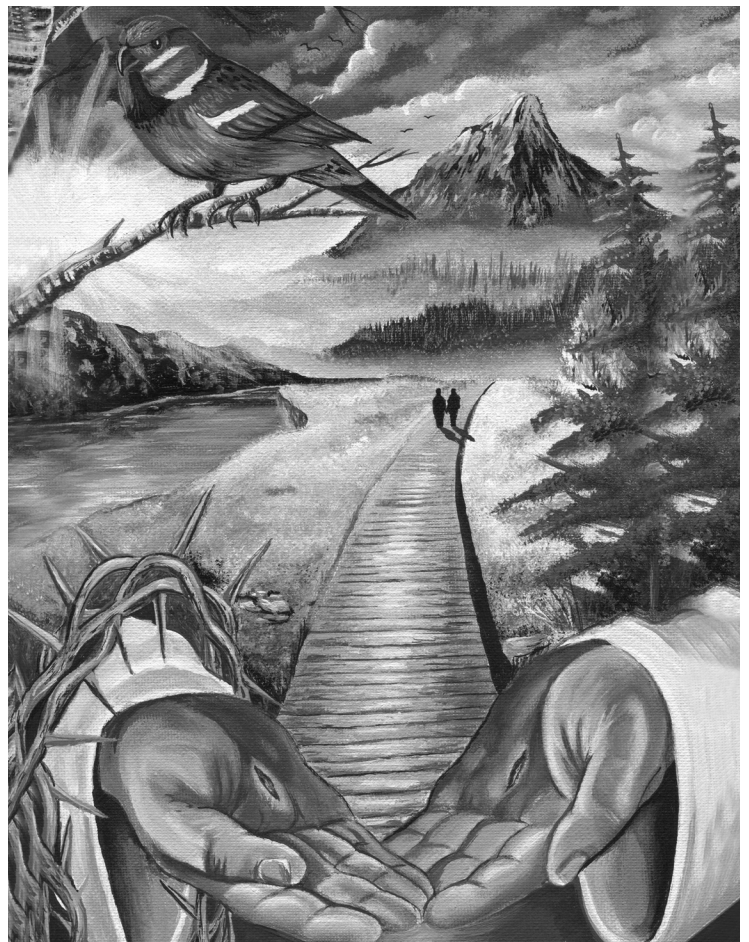
**Jesus' life shows us how to follow God.**

The Bible does not tell us much about Jesus' early life after His birth. The next major events described in the Bible took place almost thirty years later. By then, Jesus had grown up, and John, His relative, had become a prophet.\*

John was known as John the Baptist, and he lived by the Jordan River. He spent his days telling God's people to repent.\* He told them to get ready for God to keep His promise to "do something new" for His people (Isaiah 43:19). The poor, the rich, tax collectors, soldiers, and religious leaders came to the river to hear John speak. Many people also came so that John could baptize\* them. They wanted to receive God's forgiveness and live new lives.

What they did not know was that God already had a plan in place to give them new life, which started when Jesus came to earth. Jesus was getting ready to begin His ministry. He was going to show the people how to truly follow God and make it possible for them to be completely forgiven of their sins.

1. What do you think people mean when they say they want to live a new life?



**Artwork by Vincent M., former Crossroads student**

## Remembering Promises

A long time before John was born, God rescued the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt and brought them to a place near the Jordan River. He promised to give them the land on the other side of the river. But before God's people crossed the river to live in the new land, God asked them to make a promise to Him. He asked

\* An asterisk after a word or phrase indicates that it is defined in the Glossary of Terms on page 7.

them to love Him and serve Him as their only God. He asked them to love their neighbors and practice justice. However, even though they tried, God's people could not keep their promise to God. Even though God kept reminding them over and over again, they kept failing.

When John baptized people in the Jordan River, it reminded them of the promise their ancestors\* had made to God at the river. It also reminded them of the ways they were still failing to follow God.

John was telling the people that they needed to repent of their sins and restart their relationship with God. But he was also telling them that Jesus was coming and that Jesus was going to change things. John was doing what God had promised he would do. He was getting the people ready for the new thing that God was about to do through Jesus.

Read **Luke 3:7–18**.

2. How did John answer each group of people when they asked him how to show God that they had turned away from their sins?

The crowd:

The tax collectors:

The soldiers:

3. In your own words, what was John trying to teach them?

## Jesus Is Baptized

While John was baptizing people, Jesus came to the river and asked John to baptize Him. John knew he was not good enough or important enough to baptize Jesus. But Jesus told him, "It carries out God's holy plan" (Matthew 3:15).



Jesus did not need to be forgiven by God. Although Jesus was completely human, He was also God. Therefore, Jesus was perfect. He had never sinned. But He showed the people the first step toward living a new life. He reminded them that they needed to promise to follow God again.

As soon as John baptized Jesus, the sky opened, and God spoke from heaven. He said, "You are my Son, and I love you. I am very pleased with you" (Luke 3:22).



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God's words in those two sentences come from chapters in the Old Testament\* that describe the Messiah.\* God had promised that the Messiah would come to rule as King over God's people forever. He would defeat evil and rule over the entire world (Psalm 2). He would be God's servant who would bring hope and justice (Isaiah 42). At Jesus' baptism, God was telling the people that Jesus, His Son, was that King.

4. Why do you think God used words from the Old Testament to tell people about Jesus?

## Jesus Is Tempted\*

After Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit\* led Him to the desert. Jesus stayed there for forty days—with no food. After forty days, He was very hungry. But He was doing what God wanted Him to do. While He was there, He was tempted three times.

Read **Luke 4:1–13**.

5. What were the three ways the devil tried to tempt Jesus?

6. How did Jesus answer the devil each time? How did His answers show that He was following God?

Jesus' forty days in the desert pointed back to a similar event in history. Hundreds of years before, God had rescued His people from slavery in Egypt. They wandered through the desert for forty years before they reached the land God had promised to give them. When they arrived, they found that the land was filled with their enemies who had large and powerful armies. God's people were scared because they did not think God could save them, so they rebelled\* (Numbers 14:1–35). They said to their leaders, "We wish we had died in Egypt or even in this desert!" (Numbers 14:2). They refused to enter the land.

The people had forgotten how God had taken care of them for years. God had defeated an entire army that was determined to capture them and make them work as slaves again (Exodus 14:5–31). God had given them food directly from heaven in the desert (Exodus 16:1–35). God had traveled with them day after day and kept them safe. But when they faced this new challenge, they were afraid.

God's people had failed to love, serve, and trust God. But when Jesus was tested, He succeeded. He remembered God's call to serve only Him. Jesus' willingness to trust God showed that He would be the leader who would carry Israel's story forward. He would show them how to truly follow God.

## Jesus' Mission

After leaving the desert, Jesus went back to Galilee (GAL-ih-lee) to His hometown of Nazareth. He entered the synagogue\* (SIN-uh-gahg) to read from the Scriptures, as He often did. He opened the scroll\* of Isaiah and read out loud, "The Spirit of the Lord and King is on me. The Lord has anointed me to announce good news to poor people" (Isaiah 61:1).

Jesus read several more verses from the scroll. When He was done, He told the people in the synagogue that the words the prophet Isaiah had written were about Him. He told them that these words formed the purpose of His ministry on earth. Jesus was going to keep the promises that God had made to His people through Isaiah hundreds of years before.

Read **Luke 4:16–21**.

7. What did Jesus say He came to do (see verses 18–19)? Write it in your own words:

In those days, being poor was not only about a lack of money. Being poor meant that a person had a low social status. Women, children, sick people, and sinners were also thought of as poor. They were ignored by everyone. Surprisingly, some people who had a lot of money, like tax collectors, were also included in this group. They were considered outsiders because they helped Israel's enemies and stole money from people. But Jesus came



Notes/Questions

to bring His good news to all of these groups of people. Jesus' ministry was for everyone. Rich or poor, strong or weak, powerful or powerless—everyone was included.

He would free everyone who followed Him from their sin and shame so that they could become part of God's new Kingdom.

## The Disciples\*

As Jesus preached the good news, He began to choose men to follow Him and help Him in His mission. He chose twelve men to be His disciples (dih-SAI-pulz).

The disciples Jesus chose were a group of rough men. Some were fishermen. Before they joined Jesus, they spent their days dragging fish out of the water with heavy nets. They risked their lives to make a living, sailing on a sea that could kill them in an instant.



Video stills courtesy of BibleProject

Jesus also chose a tax collector, Matthew (also called Levi), who worked for the Roman Empire and cheated his own people out of money, and a political rebel, Simon the Zealot, who opposed the Roman Empire. Because of their backgrounds, these two men likely would not have been friends.

But Jesus brought together people who were outsiders and enemies. In God's Kingdom, they promised to love and care for one another and work with each other. Jesus asked them to follow Him and leave their old lives behind.

Read **Luke 5:1–11** and **Luke 5:27–32**.

8. Based on these verses, why do you think the disciples were willing to follow Jesus?

## Jesus' Message

Following Jesus meant learning to live a whole new life. Jesus taught things like, "Blessed are those who are humble. They will be given the earth" (Matthew 5:5) and "Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them" (Matthew 5:10).

Jesus told His disciples to be surprisingly generous\* to people they did not like. He told them to forgive others—even when they did not deserve it. He even told them to love their enemies. This is the way God has always wanted His people to live.

Jesus not only taught all of this, but He also promised that He would lead the way. He promised that He would be surprisingly generous in everything He did. He would forgive and love His enemies by giving up His life for them.

Read **Luke 6:27–31**.

9. If everyone did what Jesus taught in this passage, how would the world be different?

## More Than a Prophet

One day, Jesus went up into the mountains to pray, and He took a few of His disciples with Him. While they were there, something amazing happened.

Read **Luke 9:28–36**.

10. What words from heaven did the disciples hear? Why do you think God used those words to describe Jesus to the disciples?

Moses and Elijah were ancient prophets who lived in the times of the Old Testament. Like the disciples, they also saw God's glory\* on a mountain when they were alive. And there on the mountain, Jesus spoke with the two of them as equals. He talked to them about how He was going to die to keep God's promises.

God was showing the disciples that Jesus was a powerful prophet, just like Moses and Elijah. But this passage teaches us that Jesus was more than just a great prophet. Jesus was glowing with God's glory from the inside out. Jesus knew God's plans and spoke for God because He WAS God. He was going to save the world and show the people how to follow God because He was God, as a human, on earth. But the disciples did not understand what that meant at the time. Jesus still had more to show them before they could finally understand Him.

11. Based on what you read in this lesson, who is Jesus and what did He come to earth to do?

## Action Step

Look back at your answer to question 9. Think of something you can do this week to take a step toward that kind of world. Write down what you did and what happened as a result:

## Glossary of Terms

**Each lesson contains Bible names, terms, and ideas that may be new to you. We will do our best to provide definitions that are easy to understand. You will see an asterisk (\*) the first time each term appears in the lesson.**

**Ancestor** — A person's relative who lived in the past but is no longer living.

**Baptize** — To make someone pure or clean in their heart, usually through the use of water. In Jesus' time, people were baptized by being lowered into a river and brought back up again. Being baptized is a sign that, just as water washes away dirt, God washes away our sins.

**Disciple** — Someone who traveled with a teacher in order to learn from him. Jesus first had twelve disciples, and more joined Him later. Today, the word is used to refer to anyone who is following Jesus.

**Generous** — Willing to give money, help, kindness, etc., especially more than is usual or expected.

**God's glory** — The presence of God as seen or experienced by humans. The Bible often describes God's glory as a light that shines brighter than anything else on earth. The term also refers to God's power, beauty, and greatness.

**Holy Spirit** — One of the three persons of the Trinity of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in Christians, guides them, and gives them new life.

**Messiah** — "The anointed one." When Israel first became a kingdom, its kings were anointed—meaning they had oil poured on their heads—when they took power. God promised through the prophets (see "**prophet**") that a Messiah would come to earth,

be anointed as King, and rule over Israel forever (2 Samuel 7:12–13; Daniel 7:13–14).

**Old Testament** — The first part of the Christian Bible. It is made up of thirty-nine books, which contain God's laws, the writings of the prophets (see "**prophet**"), and the history of God's people before Jesus was born.

**Prophet** — Someone who brought messages from God to His people. Many books of the Bible were written by prophets (for example, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea). These books contain many promises God made to His people that came true years later.

**Rebel** — To resist or disobey someone who has authority or control (verb); someone who does not obey authority or who fights against the government (noun).

**Repent** — To turn from sin and promise to live in a way that is pleasing to God.

**Scroll** — A roll of paper or animal skin on which something is written. The books of the Bible were originally written on scrolls.

**Synagogue** — A building in a town or city where God's people gathered to read and study Scripture and worship God.

**Tempt** — To encourage someone to do something wrong, bad, or unwise, promising them something good in return.

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