

Small Group Questions | October 14th, 2018

Explore God – Is Jesus Really God?

John 4:1–30

Other Passages Referenced: Exodus 3:14; Daniel 7:13–14; John 19:28; 20:30–31,

Introductory Comments to Group Leaders:

The question “Is Jesus Really God?” is answered by so many parts of Scripture that we only listed above a few of the central passages mentioned in the sermon. You’ll need to pick and choose what you think will be most helpful to your group. The Absolute “I Am” section in the **Background Helps** may be new and helpful information for some that you’ll want to touch on. Please make sure you save some time for Practical Applications. The questions in that section alone could fill your entire group time.

Here are the video links for this week’s videos that correspond to our big question:

Pulse of the World – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5tX1DgdzRg&index=2&t=15s&list=WL>

The Curiosity Collective – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjDPkDEGPqk&list=WL&index=2>

Again this week, I put some answers to the questions and commentary in bold text at the bottom of this document. The numbers correspond to the numbers of the questions. Please refer to those answers after you have delved into the text on your own.

Sermon Recap: We find several common responses to the question, “Is Jesus really God?”— “I don’t care who he is.” “He is a great leader.” “He never said he was God.” “He is a legend made up after his death.” “He is a liar.” However, the foundational response of Christianity is, “Jesus really is God!” **The big idea to take away is, *Jesus declared himself to be God in his words; his acts demonstrated powers that only God has; and his resurrection shows God’s approval of his claims and his acts.***

Hook: *A Question to Help Ignite Conversation*

Please show one or both of the videos above, depending on what you think will be most helpful to your group. Allow a few minutes for comments.

Look: (Please read this to your group.) As we look at the Bible to answer the question “**Is Jesus really God?**” we will also answer some related questions: *Did Jesus claim to be God? Is there any evidence to support the claim that Jesus is God? Could Jesus have been a sufficient savior as God’s sinless son, without himself being God?*

Background Helps – (You likely know most of the members of your group, but be careful not to assume they all know who Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph are. Some may be thinking of Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus.)

- **Samaria and Samaritans** – The territory of Samaria was on the main ridge road between Judea and Galilee known as the ancient way of the patriarchs, which Josephus said took about three days to travel. Some Jews of this time probably preferred to avoid this route and travel the longer way from Jerusalem down to the Jordan Valley, along the river, and enter Galilee via the crossing at Beth Shan/Beit Shean (Scythopolis).¹ It would be helpful to have group members look at the geography on a map. Some may need some orientation in finding the right map in their Bibles.

¹ Gerald L. Borchert, [John 1–11](#), vol. 25A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 199.

- **Jacob and Joseph** – Jacob is a son of Isaac and a grandson of Abraham. His name was later changed to Israel. Jacob had 12 sons who were also known as the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph was Jacob’s second youngest son who became second in command to Pharaoh, the King of Egypt.
- **Living water** – this is another example of double-meaning. Living water in that time could refer to running water as from a spring or stream as compared to still water of a pond or well. Jesus used the term to refer to himself.
- **Samaritan Religious Beliefs** – The mixed race Samaritans had some differing religious views from the Jews of Israel. Both groups considered themselves descendants of Abraham and Jacob. One difference is that Jews believed God declared Jerusalem in Israel as the holy place. Samaritans believed God named Mt. Gerizim in Samaria as the holy place.
- **Absolute “I Am” Statements** – In Exodus 3:14, God discloses His identity to Moses as “**I Am.**” –¹⁴ God said to Moses, “**I am who I am.**” **And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”** When Jews heard the phrase, “I Am,” with no other referent, they thought of God’s special name for Himself. The Greek translated this self-disclosing phrase from Exodus as “**Ego eimi.**” Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus says things like “I am the bread of life” and “I am the light of the world.” But, when Jesus uses the phrase, “ego eimi” without any noun following, His Jewish hearers understood him to be using God’s self-disclosing name about himself. Jewish listeners understood these **absolute “I Am” statements** as Jesus claiming to be God. These statements are often missed in our English translations because proper English requires us to say, “I am he,” or “It is I” rather than the literal “I am” that heartens back to Exodus 3:14.

Read John 4:1–26

1. How do we see the progression of the Samaritan woman’s developing understanding of Jesus’ identity in this passage?
2. Can you find what appears to be an absolute “I Am” statement in John 4:25–26?
3. What do you think was John’s purpose in presenting this mixed-race, religiously-confused, morally-questionable, likely social-outcast woman on Samaritan soil, as the first person to whom Jesus declared himself to be the Messiah, while inferring that he was also God?

Other Passages and Evidences that Argue Really Jesus is God

4. Can you recall other absolute “I am” passages referenced in the sermon? ... Responses of the hearers?
5. Can you recall from the sermon or Scripture evidences of Jesus exercising power normally thought to belong only to God?
6. How should we respond to those who say,
 - a. Jesus was a good and wise teacher but not God
 - b. Jesus never claimed to be God
 - c. Jesus’ followers created the legend that he was God after his death

Illustrations:

Illustrations and quotes can be found on the “Sermon Slides” link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org

Took: *Applying the message to our lives.*

Practical Applications:

1. How did you become convinced that Jesus was God in human flesh, rather than just a great teacher, a prophet, a miracle worker, etc.? ... Or if you haven’t arrived at that conviction, what stands in your way?

2. What figurative wells might you be drawing from in place of going to Jesus as the Living Water ... wells that cannot satisfy and are destined to run dry? (I.e. relationships, money, appearance, power, intelligence, etc.)
3. What does Jesus' intentional engagement with the Samaritan woman say to you about your gospel engagement with others? ... Is there any particular group or type of people you go out of your way to avoid? (Lifestyle ... race ... location ... different nationality ... different religious beliefs ... etc.)
 - a. It would be a good opportunity to remember the new church plant in your prayer time as a group.
4. Will you pray for God to lead you to someone who needs to hear what God's word has been teaching you through this sermon/study?

Verse:

²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." — John 20:26–28

Prayer: "Lord Jesus, you are more than our Savior. You are our God who died for us. You thirsted on the cross so that we might never thirst again. Please use us to let others know who you really are."

What we hope members glean from the passage.

1. She saw Jesus first as a Jewish man (9) ... then as a prophet (19)... then as the coming Messiah/King (25, 29).
2. "I, the one who speaks to you, am." — Proper English has us saying, "I am he," but the "he" is not present in the original passage.
3. Jesus wants himself and God to be known to all kinds of people. His Kingdom is not just for Jews in Israel, but for immoral, outcast, confused outsiders as well.
4. Absolute "I Am" passages mentioned in John —
 - a. To his frightened disciples in a boat when Jesus was walking on water toward them
 - i. 6:20 "I Am. Do not be afraid" ... They received him into the boat
 - b. To a mixed audience of religious leaders and other worshipers in the temple
 - i. 8:24 – "Unless you believe that "I Am" you will die in your sins." ... Who are you?
 - ii. 8:28 – "When you lift up the Son of Man, you will know that 'I Am.'" ... Many believed in him (30)
 - iii. 8:58 – "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, 'I Am.'" ... They picked up rocks to stone Jesus.
 - c. To guards and religious leaders who came looking for Jesus to arrest him
 - i. 18:5 "Jesus said, 'I Am.'" ... Jesus was arrested.
5. Authority to judge the world (John 3) ... authority to be Lord over the Sabbath (John 5) ... authority to forgive other people's sin (John 6) ... claim have lived a perfect/sinless life (John 8) ... authority to bring dead people back to life (John 11) ... Claim to be the source of truth (John 14). Some might also mention Jesus' power over wind, rain, and nature (Matt 8:26–27).
6.
 - a. Liar or lunatic from C. S. Lewis on the slides
 - b. Most of our Bible content
 - c. The Eddy/Boyd quote from the slides.