

What Was And Is Jesus Christ Like ?

This is a fair question to ask.

There are four accounts of Jesus Christ's life on earth as a human being some 2,000 years ago.

These accounts written by those who spent over three years constantly with Jesus as a dynamic, radiant and supremely attractive human being.

Large crowds were attracted to Him over this three year period of teaching what was and is a very radical message.

We know little about Jesus' physical features other than the fact that His trade for the first 30 years of His life as a carpenter must have given Him a strong and rugged body.

As a Palestinian Jew the colour of His skin was olive, His eyes brown, hair black and His hooked nose.

Jesus' mother tongue was Aramaic with a Hebrew dialect and an accent common to those born in Galilee.

Jesus was thoroughly at home with the Hebrew scriptures and could speak Greek and possibly Latin.

In the four accounts of Jesus' life we find **no** interest in the above facts, only in His character.

The first thing that strikes you in these accounts is that Jesus was good company. Judges, tax collectors, soldiers, fishermen and prostitutes, all found His company irresistible.

Jesus broke all the taboos that separated various people in a highly structured Jewish society.

Jesus was at home in the tavern as He was in the temple.

Jesus was an inspiration to the uneducated and intellectuals alike.

What was remarkable in a culture where a pious Jew thanked God daily that He was not born a woman. Jesus welcomed all women, from prostitutes to wealthy widows, to become an important part of His work.

Jesus respected all women and they became devoted to Him.

Jesus was sometimes surrounded by little children who received His full attention.

Jesus was a man for all types of people and marvellous company.

To Jesus, God the Father was very real and He was intensely aware of His presence.

We often read of Jesus disappearing for a time of prayer and made astonishing claims about His relationship with God the Father.

John 5:19, 30-31 [NIV] *“Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.” ... “By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. “If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid.”*

Totally subject to the Will of God the Father.

John 8:29 [NIV] *“The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.”*

Always did what was pleasing to God the Father.

In everything that Jesus did He made God the Father very real, bringing Him into everyday life and the decisions He made.

Jesus lived so close to His unseen yet intensely real heavenly Father that He provides a clear window for us to see the invisible God the Father.

John 14:8-14 [NIV] *“Philip said, ‘Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.’” Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? **Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”*

Many of those who met Jesus felt they had come in contact with God the Father.

Jesus made God the Father truly accessible for the first time in the lives of many who met Him.

Jesus continues to do this today.

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the **Spirit of truth**. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. **I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**”*

We can know Jesus today and through Him God the Father, if we allow the Holy Spirit to work actively in our lives.

Matthew 9:35-36 [NIV] *“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, **he had compassion** on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”*

Matthew 14:14: [NIV] *“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, **he had compassion** on them and healed their sick.”*

The word “*compassion*” was linked to many of Jesus’ thoughts and actions.

Mark 6:34-44 [NIV] *“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, **he had compassion** on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” But he answered, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “That would take eight months of a man’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?” “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They*

all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.”

The compassion was expressed in a very practical way. Healing but also feeding.

Jesus not only taught of the love that God the Father had for all human beings, He practiced that love in the way He lived and interacted with other human beings.

Luke 7:11-15 [NIV] *“Soon afterwards, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.” Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.”*

Jesus had total empathy with all people in need.

The life of Jesus shines out as the ideal life for all humanity.

There was **no** vice that shone up in the character of Jesus and there is **no** virtue that He did not have.

Jesus never turned away any who came to Him for help.

John 4:7-15 [NIV] *“When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?” Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.””*

Jesus parched by the heat of the sun, was **not** too thirsty to converse with a needy woman and help her.

John 11:32-36 [NIV] *“When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. **Jesus wept.** Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”*

Jesus wept at the tomb of His friend Lazarus, in sympathy for the family who had lost a loved one.

Matthew 8:1-3 [NIV] *“When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.”*

Jesus laid His hands on a leper, fearless of the grim disease, when others avoided any such contact.

Luke 23:32-34 [NIV] *“Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.”*

Jesus even asked His heavenly Father to forgive the soldiers who nailed Him to the cross.

There has never been such an example of such unselfish love, tirelessly poured out for others.

The sheer authority of Jesus jumps out of the accounts of His teaching as recorded in the four gospels.

Matthew 7:28-29 [NIV] *“When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because **he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.**”*

The scribes were the clergy of the day, like modern scholars, constantly appealed to others as authorities.

Matthew 5:20 [NIV] *“**For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.**”*

“For I tell you” ... this term was used again and again by Jesus.

John 14:6 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, “**I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.**”*

Jesus claimed Himself to be the truth.

Jesus was a man who did **not** speculate about the things of God. He knew, and people recognised, that authority.

Not only did Jesus Christ speak with authority He acted with supernatural power.

Matthew 8:23-27 [NIV] *“Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, “**What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!**”*

Who else can address a storm and tell it to stop its raging?

Matthew 14:14-21 [NIV] *“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so that they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. “Bring them here to me,” he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. **Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.**”*

Who else could calmly tell His disciples to feed a hungry crowd of 5,000 men and their families with five small loaves and two fish, ending up with 12 baskets of leftovers?

Matthew 12:22 [NIV] *“Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.”*

Who else has power to drive out evil spirits and restore blindness and deafness?

John 19:7-11 [NIV] *“The Jews insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.” When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. “Where do you come from?” he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. “Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realise I have power either to free*

you or to crucify you?” Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

Who else could face a cruel governor, who thought he had the power of life and death over you, and calmly tell him that he had no power at all unless it had been allowed him by the heavenly Father of us both?

What a man of simply staggering power and authority.

This authority and power that Jesus Christ expressed was expressed in tireless, outgoing, unselfish love for all humanity.

Jesus’ whole life and ministry was based on the mission that His heavenly Father had given Him, a mission of sacrificial love.

John 3:16-17 [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

The reason for the human existence of Jesus Christ was to save all humanity from eternal death because of our sins.

God the Father’s problem was how could He forgive the sins of humanity without compromising His own purity and holiness.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as He died in agony on the cross was the answer.

Jesus Christ’s perfect, holy and righteous life is a substitute for our deserved death.

This is how we as part of sinning humanity are saved from ourselves, and the result of our rebellious nature.

John 13:1 [NIV] *“It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.”*

Jesus showed the love that God the Father has for all humanity by facing the agony of His life sacrifice on the cross.

Romans 5:8 [NIV] *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Before we even heard of Jesus Christ, He died for us.

John 15:12-13, 17 [NIV] *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” ... “This is my command: Love each other.”*

The response that God the Father is seeking to this unconditional love, is that we reflect this love in our relationship with Him and other human beings.

The love Jesus taught, the love He embodied so matchlessly is the hallmark of His disciples.

Who only then can truly be called Christians [little Christs]?