

# Session 4: Who Is Jesus?

## SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

**Main Idea:** Fully God and fully human, Jesus defeated sin and death for us, modeled righteous living, and calls us to follow him.

**Head Change:** To know that Jesus is fully God and fully human.

**Heart Change:** To feel humbled that Jesus, our eternal king and creator, lowered himself and experienced death on our behalf.

**Life Change:** To show our gratitude for Jesus by imitating him in how we love and serve others.

## SESSION'S QUESTION AND ANSWER

## Who is Jesus?

Jesus is fully God, the second Person of the Trinity, who became fully human to give himself as a sacrifice on our behalf, ushering in the kingdom of God.

Through his death and resurrection, he saves those who believe in and follow him from the power of sin and death.

[illegible]

## **REVIEW LAST SESSION**

In our last session, we contemplated what went wrong with us, the destruction that sin brings to our world and to our relationships with God and each other. **Which of the Deeper Walk exercises did you choose to work through? What value has it brought to you?**

## **OPEN**

**Think of your closest friends. What qualities drew you to them?**

Ask a group why they love their best friends, and you'll get different answers from each person. Shared interests, common sense of humor, longtime loyalty, affection, trust—deep friendships develop over time, connecting two people in many ways. In our session today, Francis introduces us to Jesus, our incredible and complex savior. The time and effort it takes to know him deeply will enrich our lives here and eternally.

## **WATCH**

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Francis Chan's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

**Why did God the Son become human?**

**Why is it important for Christians to study the life of Christ?**

Show Session 4: *Who Is Jesus?* (13 minutes).

## DISCUSS

In our last session, we ended by contemplating how, though our sin had separated us from God, his love made a way for us to reconcile with him. Jesus is that way. Francis said he wanted to be careful with how he described Jesus. **Using single words or short phrases, how would you describe Jesus?**

Jesus is a complex person. Let's discover some of the ways Scripture describes him. The Gospel of John opens with five sentences that mirror the first lines of Genesis 1. Read John 1:1–4. John wants readers to remember the creation story and realize that Jesus was there, participating in the creation of everything. John's repetition in verses 2 and 3 emphasizes that Jesus was equivalent to the Creator. He's saying this man, Jesus, is the same God you've been worshipping all along!

**What qualities of Jesus is John highlighting in these verses? How does John 1 impact the way you understand Jesus?**

[illegible]

## Peek at the Greek

In John 1:1, the author refers to Jesus as “the Word,” using the Greek word *logos*. At its most basic definition, *logos* means speech, word, or anything said. In the New Testament, writers used *logos* to reference the gospel message, Jesus’s teachings, and the communication of an idea. Greeks also imbued *logos* with the meaning of “reason.” If we combine all these definitions, Jesus is both the messenger, giving us God’s Word, and the message itself. By writing *logos* with the definite article “the” in John 1:1, John indicates Jesus’s preexistence as God, the one who acted in creation, and through whom would come grace and truth (1:17).

The Word of God who created the world became a human being. Read John 1:14. The mystery of God the Son taking on a physical body and having both a divine nature and a human nature is what theologians call the hypostatic union. **To what extent have you thought about Jesus’s two natures? What questions arise as you consider the mystery of his full humanity and full divinity?**

*For further study on Jesus as fully God and fully human, see Practice 2 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session.*

Paul's letter to the Colossians tells us more about Christ's divine nature. Read Colossians 1:15–16. When God the Son became human, he showed us the invisible God in visible, touchable action. "If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus," Francis said. **If you've spent time reading the Gospels, what kinds of things have you learned about God from reading about Jesus? How did Jesus reveal God more fully to the people he met? How has knowing Jesus revealed God to you?**

The phrase "firstborn over all creation" in verse 15 refers to Jesus as superior in rank to all created things. Because he is the one who caused creation to happen, he is ranked over it all. **How does Jesus's preeminent rank over the world influence our posture toward him? What does it look like to offer him appropriate respect and honor?**

*For an exercise in remembering Jesus's preeminence, see Practice 1 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session.*

Read Colossians 1:17 and 2:9. Jesus is fully God, the creator, ruler, and sustainer of life. He is able and willing to hear our prayers and meet our needs. Yet he waits for us to turn to him in our weakness, to admit our helplessness, and express our trust in his strength. **What struggles or hurts in your life do you need to surrender to Jesus's authority and power? In what ways are you relying on him for your needs?**

## **Ancient Voices**

In the first few centuries of the church, leaders gathered periodically at meetings called councils, where they would discuss which religious teachings were wrong (heresy) and which were right (orthodoxy). After lengthy times of prayer, debate, and study, they would craft a document declaring the views that aligned best with Scripture. The Chalcedonian Creed was adopted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 in Asia Minor as a response to certain heretical views concerning the nature of Christ. It reads, in part:

*Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood . . .*

Paul gives us more information on what happened when God the Son became a human in his letter to the Philippians. Read Philippians 2:5–8. In verse 6, Paul points his readers to consider Christ’s mindset when he, though “in very nature God,” voluntarily humbled himself—he let go of his glory—to become human and die as a sacrifice for us. **What does it mean to you that the Son of God lowered himself so greatly to save you? How can Jesus’s example of humbling himself on your behalf shape the way you relate with others?**

The progression in this passage shows Jesus’s astonishing journey:

As a member of the Trinity, he is equal with God and separate from creation.

He emptied himself of his heavenly status to become a servant, a human.

He then humbled himself even more to experience death on our behalf.

Finally, he allowed himself to be crucified, a particularly shameful form of execution.

Jesus went from the highest position in heaven to the very lowest position on earth, all because of his love for us. As his followers, we are called to be like him, to give up our “rights” on behalf of others. **Where do you rank in your social, family, or professional worlds? What sorts of privileges could you give up to serve others? In what ways can you love others sacrificially like Jesus loves you?**

Jesus’s story doesn’t end in death. Continue reading in Philippians 2:9–11. In a reversal of Jesus’s humiliation, God raised him back up to the highest position in heaven. He died and rose as a man but remains almighty God, Lord of all creation. One day, every person who has ever lived will acknowledge that he is Lord. He’s



Francis ended by encouraging us to declare Jesus as our Lord, to trust him for our salvation, and to live in obedience to him. A God who loves us enough to lay aside his glory for a time, descend to become a human like us, and suffer on our behalf is a God worth following and imitating. **In what ways has your life been changed because you accepted his gift of salvation? Whom can you tell about Jesus's love and grace today?**

### **LAST WORD**

Jesus was and is the most perfect human to walk the earth. He has been and forever will be God the Son, the second Person of the Trinity. As the one through whom all things were created, he is the object of our love and worship. And as the savior who sacrificed himself on our behalf, he is worthy of our devotion, our thanks, and our lives. Because of him, we have eternal life now and forever. So, spend time talking with him, studying his life and words, and telling others about him.

### **SESSION'S QUESTION AND ANSWER**

*Who is Jesus?*

Jesus is fully God, the second Person of the Trinity, who became fully human to give himself as a sacrifice on our behalf, ushering in the kingdom of God.

Through his death and resurrection, he saves those who believe in and follow him from the power of sin and death.

The Deeper Walk section is designed to help you practice different ways to interact with God and reflect on what you've learned in this session. Pick at least one activity to try before the next session.

Memorize Colossians 1:15–17, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and by him all things hold together.”

We introduced a lot of Scripture that describes the oneness of Jesus's two natures, the hypostatic union, and his reason for becoming human. Talk with a mentor or mature Christian friend to explore concepts and questions about Jesus's identity. Some passages you might use: Luke 1:26–56; 2:1–40 (the Nativity story) along with those we covered in this session, Philippians 2:5–11 and Colossians 1:13–20. Write down any questions you have about these passages and discuss them together.

Our relationship with Jesus involves praying to him—verbalizing our trust, thanking him for his love, and asking for his grace to live like him. If you are new to faith and unsure about prayer, ask a friend in your group to pray alongside you and help you get used to the practice. If you are familiar with prayer, start a new prayer habit such as journaling each night or using your commute to work as a dedicated time to pray.

**Practice 4: Community**

In Ephesians 4:1–6, the apostle Paul addressed the group of believers in Ephesus—the “you” in verse 1 is plural—encouraging them to be humble, gentle, and patient with one another because they were part of one body, serving one Lord in one faith (v 5). The Christian faith is meant to be lived together, in community. As a small group, discuss ways you can encourage one another regularly. Are there some needing accountability? Others who need opportunities to serve? What about those struggling with temptation or difficult circumstances? Brainstorm together who can come alongside to support those in need. Commit to researching service needs in your area. Make it your goal to include everyone in the group as you find ways to put your faith into action.

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What Is a Christian? STUDY GUIDE

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