

How Big is Your Jesus?

There are a lot of Jesus's out there.

They range from very small Jesus's to various types of a bigger Jesus, before arriving at the biggest Jesus of all.

There are those who haven't even heard the name of Jesus. To them **Jesus doesn't even exist. Could there be a smaller Jesus than that?**

Plenty of people know the name of Jesus, but then use that name as an **exclamation mark**, or to **swear**. This would indicate Jesus is of no importance to them. **That's a very small Jesus**. His name just useful for swearing.

Many will say **Jesus was a good man**, falsely accused and wrongly put to death by the Roman and religious authorities. **This is a bigger Jesus. But still just a man.**

Many will see **Jesus as a wise man**, a wise teacher. He taught good morals – 'love your neighbour as yourself'; 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you'. But others were good teachers too. He's just one of a number of big figures in history. **This Jesus is big, but not exclusively big**. It's not like he's someone who absolutely has to be sought out and followed. There's plenty other wisdom out there to follow and align with. Many will prefer the 'wisdom' of Buddha, or the 'wisdom' of the Hindu writings.

All those miracles Jesus was supposed to have done? – many say he didn't do them. Many say his disciples were so impressed by him that they falsely

turned him into a **miracle worker from God**. They say he couldn't be a miracle worker, because miracles are impossible. Life just happens according to natural scientific laws. So whatever Jesus was, however 'big' he was in the world, he is not as big as his disciples made him out to be. He didn't heal the sick, raise the dead, feed the 5000.

In Jesus' day religious leaders acknowledged Jesus did miracles, but they accused him of doing miracles using the power of the devil. As such he was a blasphemer, a wicked, ungodly man. Not a small Jesus here. This is a big Jesus – he performs miracles. But he's big in the wrong direction – big on evil, not good – **a false Messiah; a false prophet**.

Judaism today says Jesus was a false prophet. Others though say he was a **true prophet from God**. He is one among a whole list of God sent prophets through history – Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammad. In Islam Jesus is one among a select few. This Jesus is getting big. But big enough? Big enough for what?

In the minds of many, Jesus gets even bigger. He's more than 'just a man'. He's **more than a prophet** sent from God. In various ways there is even **something divine about him**.

For the Gnostics, Jesus has to be separated into two. There is the earthly man Jesus, and there is the **cosmic divine Christ** who comes upon / into

Jesus. This 'Jesus Christ' comes to embody 'Christ consciousness'. He becomes a prime example of one who through special knowledge, found release from the evils of material reality. This Jesus is big as a forerunner, showing others how they too can escape this world. In some sense this **Jesus is a Saviour, but only by way of example**.

For the Jehovah's Witnesses, **Jesus is a 'god'**. Not the God, but a god, a lesser god. He too is a saviour figure. By his death and resurrection he paid the penalty for the sin of all humanity. This is a big Jesus! But still not the biggest Jesus out there. Although this Jesus is a saviour, he's really only a **part saviour**, because if people want to be saved, ie go to heaven, then they not only need to believe in Jesus and put their trust in him. They also need to add in their own good works and obedience. This is a **Jesus + good works path to salvation**.

For the LDS Church, **Jesus is a 'spirit child'** born of the Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother. Sent into the world, he attained 'godhood' through an obedience that took him into the agony he experienced in the garden of Gethsemane as he faced death. This god Jesus shows the path to follow. People are to be obedient into their own agony of suffering. Having done all they can in obedience, God will then step in to add what is lacking, and will confer 'godhood' onto them, as he did with Jesus. **This is a big Jesus**. He shows the way. He is now a god forever. **But, he is not an all sufficient saviour**. Obedience is required as a prerequisite for salvation.

There is a bigger Jesus still. The only Jesus that gets the job of salvation done in its totality. **The Jesus of the Bible; the Jesus of the Christians; the true Jesus.** Not the Jesus who has been twisted, distorted, reduced in size, and emptied of his identity and power.

Jesus, Son of God. True God of true God. Begotten not made. Eternally God. One in essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Three persons, one God.

Not a god, but **the God**. Who became human and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Who as a true human could represent us, humanity, before the Father. Who as true God could lead a sinless life, and offer himself as a sacrifice for the sins of all people over all time. Only God could do that, and God did. **Jesus, the all sufficient Saviour.** Who calls us to come to him in faith and trust, and in so doing participate in the great exchange. We give him our sin, and he gives us his holiness – salvation done. Now we are sons and daughters of God. Now we are heirs of eternal life. Now we are seated with Jesus Christ in

the heavenly realms. Now we have the Holy Spirit within us as a deposit guaranteeing the life to come. Jesus has done it all. There is nothing left to do for our salvation. Sure, there is a life to live out as sons and daughters of God. There is a 'growing in Christ' that sits before us. There is a need for us to keep in step with the Spirit within as he seeks to guide and grow us. But this is not Jesus + good works. This is not working for salvation. This is living out salvation already ours.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." *Ephesians 2:8-10*

So,... how big is your Jesus?

There is only one **JESUS** big enough.



Is
your
Jesus
BIG
enough?

