

ANGLICAN CHURCH NOOSA CONFRONTING JESUS

Jesus the Son

Rev'd Chris Johnson – August 31, 2025

This week Lynda and I went to see the latest Superman movie.

It was a rollicking good flick following the usual themes of -good versus evil, perseverance against all the odds, a little bit of romance and of course the ultimate triumph of Superman.

You might say why bother going to see it if there's nothing new. Well the well-worn themes were given plenty of contemporary feel including arch-enemy Lex Luther's use of super-computer models and gaming technology to try and defeat Superman, and then Superman teaming up with other superheroes to defeat evil rather than just travelling faster than a speeding bullet and doing it all on his own. And there was the somewhat theological/psychological theme of Superman seeking to understand his identity and mission, in terms of both his supernatural parents and the earthly couple who brought him up.

I thought it was all very cleverly done. It illustrates to me how much we all long for someone to come and rescue us and put all the wrongs right. This is a good desire; there is nothing wrong with it.

The only question is, is a Hollywood superhero fantasy the answer ?
or is there's something better on offer?

This morning we commence a new series titled Confronting Jesus. In it we will look at 8 aspects of Jesus life and ministry. Rather than look at one book of the Bible in detail, we will dip into passages across all four gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to pull out the stories of Jesus which illustrate these 8 aspects of his life. The themes are -Jesus the Son, the King, the Healer, the Teacher, the Lover, the Servant, the Sacrifice, the Lord.

These are the chapter headings in Rebecca McLaughlin's book Confronting Jesus. This will be the outline for us exploring Jesus in the Gospels. We will be using the Gospels as the foundation for our preaching rather than McLaughlin's book. Sermons will be all about Jesus from the Gospels; so it is not essential that you read the book, but you will certainly find it helpful if you want to get the most out of the series. These themes will be the topics in our Connect Groups over the next two months as well. So I encourage you to join a Connect Group.

So today we are looking at **Jesus the Son**. This is foundational for understanding who Jesus is and the place he should have in our lives.

The question is - is Jesus just a great human being ? or is he the Son of God?

There are many people who see him as a great human being but nothing more. eg,

Buddhism teaches that Jesus was not God but rather an enlightened man like Buddha.

The Bahai religion says that Jesus was a manifestation of God and a prophet but not the Son of God.

The Jehovah's Witnesses say Jesus never claimed to be God.

We expect other religions to have their own take on Jesus however what is particularly sad and distressing is when those who claim to belong to be Christian also adopt some of these views.

In the 1990's a number of liberal scholars within the church came together under what was called the Jesus Seminar.

Robert Funk the founder of the movement said this,

"The church has preserved the memory of Jesus as the proclaimer of God's Kingdom, but overlaid it with the proclamation of Jesus as the Christ. The result is a hybrid figure who never existed."

John Crossan said, "Jesus was a peasant Jewish cynic... who's parables proclaimed the Kingdom of God is already present in the world if only we open our eyes to see it."

Marcus Borg said, "The pre-Easter Jesus is not about himself... Jesus' message is not about believing in him. Rather, he is about the reality of God."

The Jesus Seminar was disbanded around 2006, but sadly, many of the ideas are still around. There are all sorts of ideas about Jesus out there. But where do we go to find the authentic Jesus? In the Bible we have what is called the Apostolic record, and I suggest these are the people who knew Jesus and can tell us about the real Jesus.

So let's look at what the Bible says,

Our key text is Mark 1:11. This is Jesus' baptism and we read that "... a voice came from heaven:

"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

This is a somewhat subtle way of introducing us to Jesus' divinity. The voice from heaven is a supernatural sign that Jesus baptism was different from everyone else who was there that day being baptised by John.

This is the Son sent by the Father.

This is the Son loved by the Father.

This is the Son with whom the Father is well pleased.

This is an anointing for three years of public ministry which will have a significant impact not only on Jesus contemporaries but on the next 21 centuries of human history.

John the Baptist declares Jesus is, one more powerful than he, the straps of his sandals he is not worthy to stoop down and untie. Whereas John is baptising with water, this one, anointed from heaven, will baptise with the Holy Spirit. John is making clear he is just the warm-up act and directing the spotlight now on the Son.

The Apostle John takes a much more direct approach in introducing us to Jesus. He starts his Gospel echoing the start of the Old Testament and Genesis. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* And then a little later in v14 he makes it clear who the Word is, *"The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

The Apostle John tells us this eternal Word was there at the beginning and all things were made through him.

Rebecca McLaughlin makes this comment, “John tells us that no star in the sky or creature on earth was made without the Word who became flesh in Jesus Christ. This means that you and I were made by Jesus to. If this is true it means that Jesus knows you - embryo to grave, back to front, head to toe, thought to thought. It means he knows you better than you know yourself, because he made each inch of you.”

So John is saying Jesus is the eternal Word who was instrumental in creation.

But let's slip back into Mark and his subtle way of introducing us to the Word made flesh. In Mark Chapter 2 we find this remarkable story of Jesus not only healing a paralysed man but also declaring his sins forgiven. This is the story where Jesus was teaching in a house in Capernaum with a large crowd around him. The friends bring a paralysed man to Jesus for healing but can't get into the house, so they make a hole in the roof and let him down in front of Jesus. Rather than command the man to be healed, Jesus instead says, *“Son, your sins are forgiven.”* This really upset the teachers of the law because they knew that only God can forgive sins. How presumptuous of Jesus!

And they accuse him of blasphemy.

Jesus in a very subtle yet nevertheless absolutely clear and powerful way was wanting to show the teachers of the law that he had authority to forgive sins and he confirmed this authority with the healing.

Let's go back into John's Gospel where Jesus uses the famous I am sayings. We first come across ‘I am’ in Exodus 3:14 where Moses encounters God in the burning bush. God addresses Moses as, *“I am who I am”*.

And then in John's Gospel Jesus dares to call himself ‘I am’ on seven occasions.

- I am the bread of life.
- I am the light of the world.
- I am the resurrection and the life.
- I am the door of the sheep,
- I am the Good Shepherd.
- I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me.
- I am the true vine.

At the end of John Chapter 8 Jesus even has the audacity to say to the Pharisees *“Very truly I tell you before Abraham was born, I am!”* And the Pharisees response was to try and stone him. And why? Because he was speaking blasphemy, he was equating himself with YAHWEH.

Make no mistake, Jesus made some outrageous claims.

And now let us go to the end of John, Chapter 20:24 – 29 where we find the story of the resurrected Jesus special appearance to Thomas. Thomas is the disciple who said, *“Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”* Jesus appears to Thomas a week later with those beautiful words *“Peace be with you!”* And then he says to Thomas, *“Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”* And what is Thomas’ response to Jesus. *“My Lord and my God!”*

This good Jewish boy, Thomas, stands before the resurrected Christ and declares him to be his God. Does Jesus correct him and say no no, that's blasphemy, I'm just a prophet pointing people to God, don't call me God. No he doesn't say that; his words in v29 are, *"Because you have seen me, you have believed; Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

Jesus accepts the adoration of Thomas.

And finally let us dip into the Epistles and the Apostle Paul's understanding of Jesus. We heard that magnificent reading from Colossians this morning,

Ch1v15 *"The Son is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation. For in him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together."*

My friends the early church was a Jewish church who believed there was only one true Creator Redeeming God who was worthy of worship; and to worship anyone or anything else was idolatry. Yet this early church came to exalt Jesus and give him the highest place. They exalted Jesus as Saviour, Lord, Son of Man, and Son of God.

And we do well, to do the same today.

I said at the beginning that the popularity of Superman illustrates how much we all long for someone who is strong and compassionate to come and both rescue us and put all the wrongs right. And I said this is a good desire. The only question is where do we look to find this someone?

Hollywood in the end can only provide us with entertainment, but it is Jesus who provides us with the real thing.

Only Jesus can satisfy our desire for a Saviour who can rescue us and put all the wrongs right. The extra stretch with Jesus however, is that he doesn't just want to deal with the wrongs out there in the big bad world, he wants to deal with the wrongs in every human heart including yours and mine. To take him seriously is to let him put his finger on the evil inside you just as much as the obvious evil we see in the media every day.

The starting point for letting him do this is recognising him as the Son of God. We've touched on a few scriptures today which clearly testify to the divinity of Christ. They show us a spiritual leader who was quite comfortable exercising the prerogatives of God and taking on the title Son of God.

Other spiritual heavyweights point away from themselves to God; Jesus accepts the adoration which should only be given to God.

CS Lewis put the argument very cogently in his best selling book 'Mere Christianity'. On page 52 he says this,

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call

Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Falling at his feet and acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God is the beginning of faith.

Let me pray.

Lord Jesus your claims in the Bible are very confronting. Grant us your Holy Spirit to especially hear your voice through the scriptures we have examined this morning and come to the sincere conviction that you are indeed the Son of God.

We give you all the honour the glory and the praise. Thank you Lord Jesus. Amen.