

THE UNIQUENESS JESUS

Lesson theme: Jesus is unique among all the great people and religious leaders of the world. He is more than just a prophet or a good man. He is greater than Socrates, Buddha, Mohammad, Hindu Gurus, Lao Tse (Taoism), Moses, and even greater than angels.

Note: For most of the main points of this study I have relied on a study done by Dr. Norman Geisler called, *"The Uniqueness of Christ,"* Ankerberg Theological Research Institute.¹

Let's think of the ways Jesus is unique.

1. Jesus was unique in that he was both God and man at the same time – John 1: 1 says, *"In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God."* Then verse 14 says, *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

2. As we have seen from lesson eighteen he was unique because of all the prophecies about his coming. These are called Messianic prophecies. One of the most unique and specific messianic prophecies written about 700 years before Christ is found in Isaiah chapter 53. Verses 4-7 speak clearly, *"Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."* These prophecies were all fulfilled in the New Testament times by Jesus. None of the famous religious leaders had prophecies like this about them.²

3. He was unique in the way he was conceived.³ - The angel that appeared to Mary said to her, *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God"* (Luke 1: 35). This is called the virgin birth. She did not have relations with a man in order to conceive this child.

4. His miracles are unique compared to other leaders in other religions.⁴ His miracles fit into four categories: Miracles over nature, healings, power over the demonic powers (exorcisms), and power over death.

Control of Nature:

1. Calming the storm – Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:37-41; Luke 8:22-25
2. Feeding 5,000 - Matthew 14:14-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14
3. Walking on water - Matthew 14:22-32; Mark 6:47-52; John 6:16-21

¹ Dr. Norman Geisler , "The Uniqueness of Christ," < www.jashow.org/Articles/_PDFArchives/theological.../TD4W1003.pdf > page 1.

² Geisler, page 1.

³ Geisler, page 1.

⁴ Geisler, page 2.

4. Feeding 4,000 – Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9
5. Fish with coin – Matthew 17:24-27
6. Fig tree withers – Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14, 20-25
7. Huge catch of fish – Luke 5:4-11; John 21:1-11
8. Water into wine – John 2:1-11

Healing of Individuals (and power over the demonic, my addition)

1. Man with leprosy – Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-14
2. Roman centurion's servant – Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10
3. Peter's mother-in-law – Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:30-31; Luke 4:38-39
4. Two men possessed with devils – Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-15; Luke 8:27-39
5. Man with palsy – Matthew 9:2-7; Mark 2:3-12; Luke 5:18-26
6. Woman with bleeding – Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48
7. Two blind men – Matthew 9:27-31
8. Dumb, devil-possessed man - Matthew 9:32-33
9. Canaanite woman's daughter – Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30
10. Boy with devil - Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:17-29; Luke 9:38-43
11. Two blind men – including Bartimaeus - Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43
12. Demon-possessed man in synagogue – Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37
13. Blind man at Bethsaida – Mark 8:22-26
14. Crippled woman – Luke 13:10-17
15. Man with dropsy – Luke 14:1-4
16. Ten men with leprosy – Luke 17:11-19
17. The high priest's servant – Luke 22:50-51
18. Nobleman's son at Capernaum – John 4:46-54
19. Sick man at the pool of Bethsaida – John 5:1-15
20. Man born blind – John 9:1-41

Raising the Dead

1. Jairus' daughter – Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56
2. Widow's son at Nain – Luke 7:11-17
3. Lazarus – John 11:1-44⁵

5. His transfiguration was unique (Matthew 17: 1-13). *Jesus took Peter, James and John with him to a mountain where he was transfigured. This means he was changed. The text describes this change, "His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light" (Matthew 17: 2). This was symbolic of the glory he would receive after he rose from the dead. Then Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus. Moses represents the Old law and Elijah the coming restorer of all things. But then a voice came from heaven and said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him" (Matthew 17: 5). No matter how great Moses and Elijah were God told the disciples to listen to Jesus. This shows that Jesus was not just a prophet. He was God's Son. The Hebrew writer says that in these "last days" God has spoken to us through his Son (Hebrews 1: 2). This kind of experience did not happen to any of the leaders of other religions.*

6. His death was unique – In his own words Geisler points out that,

Events surrounding Christ's death were miraculous. This included the darkness from noon to 3 P.M. (Mark 15:33) and the earthquake that opened the tombs and rent the temple veil (Matt. 27:51-54). The manner in which he suffered the excruciating torture of crucifixion was miraculous. The attitude he maintained toward his mockers and executioners was miraculous, saying, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). The way in which he actually died was miraculous. As Jesus said, "I lay down my

⁵ Peter Miller, "The Miracles of Jesus - In Biblical Order," <<http://www.sharefaith.com/guide/christian-ministries/ministry-of-jesus/miracles-of-jesus/miracles-of-jesus---the-list.html>>

life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord” (John 10:18). At the very moment of his departure, he was not overcome by death. Rather, he voluntarily dismissed his spirit. “Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit” (John 19:30).⁶

The fact that he died for the sins of the whole world is also unique. 1 John 2: 2 says, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only ours but also for the sins of the whole world." No other religious leader claimed to die for the sins of the whole world.

7. His resurrection is unique.⁷ *All other prophets died and did not rise from the dead. Jesus is the only one famous religious man who actually rose from the dead. Jesus also predicted his own resurrection in John 2: 19; Matthew 16: 21-22; 20: 17-19. These last verses say,*

"Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, 'We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!'"

The whole foundation of Christianity is based on the resurrection according to 1 Corinthians 15: 12-19.

8. His ascension was unique.⁸ Luke 24: 50-53 describes this:

"When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God."

Luke describes this further in Acts 1: 9-11:

"After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'"

There is no parallel in any other religion of an actual historical person going into heaven in this manner and angels testifying that he would come again.

One of the earliest creeds of the church was the Nicene creed which goes back to the Council of Nicaea in 325 A. D. but the one used today was drawn up in 381 A. D. at the Council of

⁶ Geisler, page 2.

⁷ Geisler, page 2.

⁸ Geisler, page 2.

Constantinople in Rome and makes reference to the ascension, but it would be good to actually see the whole statement. This statement of faith is repeated even today in many churches. (Nicaea was a city in Anatolia (Asia minor) or today this is modern day Turkey.)

*We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; **he ascended into heaven** and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. AMEN.⁹*

9. He is unique in his sinlessness.¹⁰ *When Jesus was at his trial Pilate said in Luke 23:4 about Jesus, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." During the time of the crucifixion when darkness came over the land, the curtain of the temple was torn in two and Jesus said, "Father into your hands I commit my spirit," The Roman ruler said, "Surely this was a righteous man" (Luke 23: 44-49). One of the thieves on the cross said, "We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23: 41). Hebrews 4: 15 and 2 Corinthians 5: 21 say Jesus had no sin. Of which religious leader in the history of world religions could it be said that he had no sin like it was said about Jesus?*

10. He was unique in having so many incredible names and designations of him and his character, like these:

Advocate (1 John 2:1); Amen (Rev. 3:14); Apostle of our Profession (Heb. 3:1); Atoning Sacrifice for our Sins (1 John 2:2); Author of Life (Acts 3:15); Author and Perfecter of our Faith (Heb. 12:2); Author of Salvation (Heb. 2:10); Bread of God (John 6:33); Bread of Life (John 6:35; 6:48); Bridegroom (Mt. 9:15); Bright and Morning Star (Rev. 22: 16); Capstone (Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7); Chief Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20); Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4); Christ (1 John 2:22); Counselor (Isaiah 9: 6); Creator (John 1:3); Deliverer (Rom. 11:26); Eternal Father (Isaiah 9: 6); Eternal Life (1 John 1:2; 5:20); Faithful and True (Rev. 19:11); Faithful Witness (Rev. 1:5); Faithful and True Witness (Rev. 3:14); First and Last (Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13); Firstborn From the Dead (Rev. 1:5); Firstborn over all creation (Col. 1:15); Gate (John 10:9); God (John 1:1; 20:28; Heb. 1:8; Rom. 9:5; 2 Pet. 1:1; 1 John 5:20); Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14); Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20) Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14); Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23); Heir of all things (Heb. 1:2) High Priest (Heb. 2:17); Holy and True (Rev. 3:7); Holy and Righteous One (Acts 3:14); Hope (1 Tim. 1:1); Hope of Glory (Col. 1:27); Horn of Salvation (Luke 1:69); I Am (John 8:58); Image of God (2 Cor. 4:4); Immanuel (Isaiah 7: 14; Mt. 1:23); Judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42); King of Israel (John 1:49); King of the Jews (Mt. 27:11); King of kings (1 Tim 6:15; Rev. 19:16); King of the Ages (Rev. 15:3); Lamb (Rev. 13:8); Lamb of God (John 1:29); Lamb Without Blemish (1 Pet. 1:19); Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45); Life (John 14:6; Col. 3:4); Light of the World (John 8:12); Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5); Living One (Rev. 1:18); Living Stone (1 Pet. 2:4); Lord (2 Pet. 2:20); Lord of All (Acts 10:36); Lord of Glory (1 Cor. 2:8); Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16); Man from Heaven (1 Cor. 5:48); Master (Lk. 5:5; 8:24; 9:33); Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 9:15); Mighty God (Isa. 9:6); Morning Star

⁹ "The Nicene Creed," <<http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/nicene.htm>>.

¹⁰ Geisler, page 3.

(Rev. 22:16); Offspring of David (Rev. 22:16); Only Begotten Son of God (John 1:18; 1 John 4:9); Our Great God and Savior (Titus 2:13); Our Holiness (1 Cor. 1:30); Our Husband (2 Cor. 11:2); Our Peace (Eph 2:14); Our Protection (2 Thess. 3:3); Our Redemption (1 Cor. 1:30); Our Righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30); Our Sacrificed Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7); Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9: 6); Power of God (1 Cor. 1:24); Precious Cornerstone (1 Pet. 2:6); Prophet (Acts 3:22); Rabbi or Teacher (Mt. 26:25); Resurrection and Life (John 11:25); Righteous Branch (Jer. 23:5); Righteous One (Acts 7:52; 1 John 2:1); Rock (1 Cor. 10:4); Root of David (Rev. 5:5; 22:16); Ruler of God's Creation (Rev. 3:14); Ruler of the Kings of the Earth (Rev. 1:5); Savior (Eph. 5:23; Titus 1:4; 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:20); Son of David (Lk. 18:39); Son of God (John 1:49; Heb. 4:14); Son of Man (Mt. 8:20); Son of the Most High God (Lk. 1:32); Source of Eternal Salvation for all who obey him (Heb. 5:9); The One Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); The Stone the builders rejected (Acts 4:11); The Teacher (John 11:28, NIV); True Bread (John 6:32); True Light (John 1:9); True Vine (John 15:1); Truth (John 1:14; 14:6); Way (John 14:6); Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24); Wonderful (Isaiah 9: 6); Word (John 1:1); Word of God (Rev. 19:13). (105 names, titles or descriptions).

11. The uniqueness in Jesus' Character.¹¹ It is not as if no one before Jesus was compassionate or expressed love, but it is amazing and unique how perfect and complete his love, compassion, submission to God, non-violence and loving firmness was. Some examples are:

- He touched the untouchables like the lepers (Mark 1: 41)
- He stooped to wash the dirty feet of his disciples and this was supposed to be the work of servants (John 13: 1-17).
- Jesus, a Jew, was willing to associate with Gentiles even though this was not acceptable for the Jews (Matthew 8: 5-13; 15: 21-28).
- Even though he had the authority to call 72,000 angels to his aid he willingly permitted himself to go to the cross for our sins (Matthew 26: 53). John 10: 17-18 says, *"The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord."*
- His forgiveness of his enemies from the cross was amazing. He said, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"* (Luke 23: 34).
- Geisler points out that, *"Jesus was the perfect example of patience, kindness, and compassion. He had compassion on the multitudes (Matt. 9:36), to the point of weeping over Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37). Even though he justly condemned (in no uncertain terms) the Pharisees who misled the innocent (Matt. 23), he did not hesitate to speak with Jewish leaders who showed interest (John 3)."*¹²
- He was unique in the way opposite character traits were expressed in his person.¹³ He was the perfect example of humility but he also claimed to be one with the Father (John 10: 30). He said, *"I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am"* (John 8: 58). He claimed to be gentle and humble (Matthew 11: 29). But he had strength to go in and run out the money changers because they were misusing the court of the Gentiles (John 2: 12-25). Jesus was gentle with the children and yet he spoke very toughly to the hypocrites (Mark 10: 13-16; Matthew 23).¹⁴

12. His teaching was unique and different.¹⁵ The temple guards reported to the chief priests and Pharisees about Jesus and said in John 7: 46, *"No one ever spoke the way this man does,"* this is amazing because the Pharisees were supposed to be experts in teaching the law. Luke 2: 47 says this about his teaching, *"Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers."* Geisler puts it this way:

¹¹ Geisler, page 3.

¹² Geisler, page 3.

¹³ Geisler, page 3.

¹⁴ Geisler, page 3.

¹⁵ Geisler, page 4.

As Jesus himself declared, the substance of what he taught finds its roots in the Old Testament (Matt. 5:17-18). He condemned meaningless traditions and misinterpretations of the Old Testament (Matt. 5:21f., 15:3-5). Though the essence of what he taught was not new, the form and the manner in which he taught it was unique. The Sermon on the Mount employs a fresh teaching method. The vivid parables, such as the good Samaritan (Luke 10), the prodigal son (Luke 15), and the lost sheep (Luke 15:4f.), are masterpieces of communication. Parables stand at the heart of Jesus' teaching style. By drawing on the lifestyles of the people to illustrate the truths he wished to convey, Jesus communicated truth and refuted error. Also, by speaking in parables he could avoid "casting pearls before swine." He could confound and confuse those who did not wish to believe (the outsider), yet illuminate those who did desire to believe (the insider). While the use of allegories and parables themselves was not unique, the manner in which Jesus employed parables was. He brought the art of teaching eternal mystery in terms of everyday experience to a new height. The "laws of teaching" identified by modern pedagogues (Shafer, Seven Laws),¹⁶ were practiced perfectly in Jesus' teaching style.¹⁷

In his teaching Jesus had an incredible balance in appealing to the head and the heart. He reasoned with the best of them but he also demonstrated the truths he taught by his example, and illustrated them with stories, metaphors, parables, and hyperbole.

13. In conclusion, Jesus is a greater than: Elijah (Matthew 17: 1-5), **Solomon** (Matthew 12: 42), **Jonah** (Matthew 12: 41), **angels** (Hebrews 1: 4), **Moses** (Hebrews 3: 1-6), and **David** (Acts 2: 22-32). He is also a **superior priest** (2 Kings 22: 4; Hebrew 7: 22-28), and as we emphasized in the lesson theme, he is greater than Muhammad, the Hindu Gurus, Buddha, Socrates, and Lao Tse (Taoism).

Geisler concludes by emphasizing that:

Christ is absolutely unique among all who ever lived. He is unique in his supernatural nature, in his superlative character, and in his life and teaching. No other world teacher has claimed to be God. Even when the followers of some prophet deified their teacher, there is no proof given for that claim that can be compared to the fulfillment of prophecy, the sinless and miraculous life, and the resurrection. No religious or philosophical leader has displayed the love for people that Jesus did in dying for the sins of the world (John 15:13; Rom. 5:6-8). Jesus is absolutely unique among all human beings who ever lived.¹⁸

May God give you insight into these truths.

¹⁶ These Seven Laws are: (1) The teacher must know the lesson, truth, or art to be taught; (2) The learner must show interest in the lesson; (3) The language used as a medium between teacher and learner must be common to both; (4) The lesson to be mastered must be given in terms of truth already known by the learner; (5) Teaching must arouse the pupils to learn things for themselves; (6) Learning is thinking into one's own understanding a new idea or truth, or working into habit a new skill or art; and (7) Teaching must be completed, confirmed, and tested by review, re-thinking, and application. A chapter is presented for each law exploring the philosophy of the law, rules for teachers, and violations and mistakes. A review of the book from this site:

<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICEstSearch_SearchValue_0=ED267028&ERICEstSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED267028>.

¹⁷ Geisler, page 3, 4.

¹⁸ Geisler, page 9.

May he help you to see that Jesus is unique and that he is the Son of God, Savior of the world, Lord, the way, the truth, the life, the good shepherd, the light of life, fully God fully man, the perfect example of what it is to be fully human, the King of the universe, our High Priest, intercessor, prince of peace, sacrificial lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the rock of ages, the one who gives hope and purpose to life, the source of abundant life, the door to eternal life, the seal and hope of the resurrection, the head of the church, the coming one who is coming to receive those who have purified their lives through faith in Jesus, repentance, baptism and trusting God, and are waiting eagerly for his return.

Recommended books:

Jesus Among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian Message by Ravi Zacharias.
Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis.
The Case For Christ by Lee Strobel.

Web sites:

<http://www.answering-islam.org/Shamoun/jesus_uniqueness.htm>

<<http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/the-uniqueness-of-christ-gerald-flury-sermon-on-divinity-of-christ-156378.asp>>

Good power point at this site: www.fifthstreeteast.com/The%20Uniqueness%20Of%20Christ.ppt

