

Who is This Man?

The Unpredictable Impact of the Inescapable Jesus

(John Ortberg)

Summary

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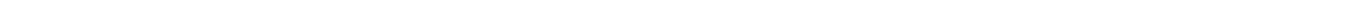
Who Is This Man?

John Ortberg

Jesus' influence has swept over history bringing His inspiration to art, science, government, medicine, and education. He continues to inspire and challenge humanity today. The fullness of God is revealed in Him.

Anyone who is interested in learning more about Jesus is likely to find this book helpful.

This summary includes some Scripture references that the book does not include.



1-The Man Who Won't Go Away

Normally, when someone dies, their impact on the world begins to recede. Jesus' impact has become greater as the years pass. His vision of life continues to haunt and challenge humanity. Jesus' influence has extended to art, science, government, medicine, and education.

- Jesus never married, but the way He treated women led to the dissolution of the sexual double standard ([John 4:6-29](#)).
- Jesus had no children, but His kindness toward them led others to value them as people ([Mat 19:14](#)).

- Jesus wrote no books, but His call to love God with all our minds, created a reverence for learning ([Mat 22:37](#)).
- Jesus held no office and led no army, but His example led to the end of emperor worship. From His example, words such as "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights" entered history.
- His example of compassion for the "least of these" inspired us to create hospitals and relief efforts ([Mat 25:40-45](#)).

Something about Jesus keeps prodding people to do what they would rather not.

2-The Collapse of Dignity

Dignity on the level of a king is the last word you would associate with Jesus in His time on earth. In that day, people thought that only kings were made in the image of their gods.

When Jesus looked at people, He saw the image of God in all of them. He treated each person with dignity.

Men who wear purple robes and glittering crowns and use gaudy titles begin to look ridiculous. Yet, the figure of the child born in a manger grows in stature.

3-A Revolution in Humanity

Jesus' crankiness and compassion came from the same source: His outrageous love for every individual and His pain when people undervalued others ([Gal 3:28-29](#)).

After Jesus died, Christian communities began to care for the hungry and sick as others in their society looked on in amazement ([Mat 25:40-45](#)).

4-What Does A Woman Want

The highest calling of a woman is the highest calling of a man: the glorious adventure of coming to know and do the will of the God who made them in His image. Through Jesus, this calling is available to any woman, regardless of her age, marital status, or child-bearing capacity.

As any person does, a woman wants to be valued as a child of God.

5-An Undistinguished Visiting Scholar

Jesus was supremely humble in His relationships yet supremely confident in His convictions. Paul noted that Jesus is Christ in whom are hidden all the measures of wisdom and knowledge ([Col 2:3](#)). One sign of Jesus' mastery was His ability to help the simplest person while still challenging the smartest.

The Puritans establish Harvard University. Consider this quote from its original student handbook, "Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life ([John 17:3](#)), and therefore to lay Christ...as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning."

The vast majority of the pioneers of science (ex. Galileo, Copernicus, Pascal, Priestley, Pasteur, Newton) viewed their work as learning to think God's thoughts.

Thinkers such as Erasmus had such a strong desire to read the New Testament in Greek that they stimulated the Renaissance.

To love God with **all** your mind ([Mat 22:37](#)) means that anti-intellectualism is anti-Christian.

6-Jesus Was Not a Great Man

Jesus purposely came into and went out of this world as a person of low status. He redefined the idea of greatness for those who follow Him ([Mark 9:35](#), [Mat 20:26](#)).

7-Help Your Friends, Punish Your Enemies

Humans are naturally prone to take sides. We assume that anyone on the other side is inferior and not worthy of our attention.

Jesus enemies are not His only problem. Jesus' over-zealous followers have historically been as painful to Him. -Dale Bruner

Jesus challenges us to love our enemies ([Mat 5:43-47](#)).

8-There Are Things That Are Not Caesar's

The Jewish people wanted a king to overthrow Rome. They thought it would be Jesus, but He told them His kingdom was not of this world ([John 18:36](#)). Jesus offended all three groups of Jews.

- The Zealots were an extreme nationalist party whose chose to **revolt** by any means. Jesus offended them by telling people to go the extra mile ([Mat 5:41](#)).
- The Essenes were ascetics who thought their

purity would cause God to destroy their enemies. They chose to **withdraw** from society. Jesus offended them by ignoring purity regulations ([Mat 8:3](#)).

- The Sadducees were pragmatists who chose to **assimilate**. Jesus offended them by stating that some things were Caesar's and some things belonged to God ([Mat 22:20-21](#)).

9-The Good Life vs. The Good Person

Our advertisements are filled with promises to give us the things we wouldn't want listed in our obituaries.

- Jesus teaches that through Him the good life is available to anyone regardless of circumstances; however, His definition of the good life is different from the world's definition ([Mat 5:1-12](#)).
- He also teaches that the good person is not simply one who does good things. The good

person is someone who genuinely wants to do good things ([Mat 5:8](#)).

- God does not tolerate hypocrisy ([Mat 23:13-32](#)).
- All persons have an inside and outside. It is the inside of persons that concerns God most ([Luke 11:39](#)).

The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable ([Rom 7:15-25](#)).

10-Why It's a Small World after All

The disciples came to understand themselves to have a mission. Their task was to form a community that reflected the presence and power of God, extend the love of this community to everyone, and invite anyone interested to join them. Before Jesus, there had

never been a movement to include people regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender, status, income, moral background, or education. No one had even considered such an idea.

11-The Truly Old-Fashioned Marriage

- Jesus places marriage and sexuality in a fundamentally different framework than that of the ancient world. He connects marriage to creation ([Mat 19:4-6](#)).
- The reason a wedding vow is a moving, wonderful, frightening sentence is that it is a lifetime promise. It transcends attraction and utility. It is an echo of what God did when He made a vow of unending love ([Hos 2:19](#)).
- To God, sex is not a commodity or animal act. Rather, it is an expression of a committed, giving relationship. There's a spiritual, as well as a physical component ([Mark 10:8-9](#)).
- Jesus teaches that a good person is not merely someone who avoids adultery. A good person is someone who does not relate to others as sexualized objects ([Mat 5:27-28](#)).
- A good husband is one who loves his wife as Christ loves the church and gives himself up for her ([Eph 5:25-33](#)).
- The person who changed marriage in the Western world more than anyone else was Himself never married.

12-Without Parallel in the Entire History of Art

People require inspiration to overcome lethargy and come alive. Jesus inspired:

- a wealthy cheat, Zacchaeus, to give away his fortune ([Luke 19:1-10](#))
- a Samaritan woman to become an evangelist ([John 4:39-40](#))
- Peter to get out of his boat ([Luke 5:1-11](#))
- Joanna, whose husband worked for Herod, to help finance His ministry ([Luke 8:1-3](#))

The most potent figure in world history as a whole is Jesus Christ, the maker of one of the few revolutions which have lasted.

-Michael Grant

- Jesus figures so prominently in works of art that He remains the most recognizable figure in the world, even though no one know what he looks like.
- The development history of European languages and literacy rests on Jesus more than any other figure in history.
- Monks in the Middle Ages invented modern music notation to spread music and enhance worship.
- Christianity has been the greatest factor in the development of architecture over the last two millennia, all due to a Man who had no place to lay His head ([Luke 9:58](#)).

13-Friday

The priests were concerned that people were beginning to believe Jesus was the Messiah. They decided to use Pilate to get rid of Him. They knew Jesus was not a military threat, but wanted Pilate to think so. This was tricky because if the people thought Jesus was a military threat, they would rally around Him. ([Mat 26:3-5](#))

The chief priests' strategy was to make two separate charges.

1. Blasphemy: so the crowds would turn against Him ([Mat 26:59-66](#))
2. Treason: so Pilate would kill Him ([Mat 27:1-3](#), [Mat 27:22-24](#)).

By His death on the cross, Jesus outlasted, outmaneuvered, out-thought, and out-loved every group and power. It was His choice. The cross changed from being the symbol of a human empire's power to a symbol of the suffering love of God.

14-Saturday

Saturday, the day after the crucifixion, was a day between:

- despair and joy
- confusion and clarity
- bad news and good news
- darkness and light.

The disciples were confused. They did not think that Jesus would raise from the dead, even though He told them so ([Mark 16:14](#), [Luke 24:25-27](#), [Luke 24:44-45](#)).

Our time in history is one long Saturday. We're waiting for Christ to return. What do you choose to do during this Saturday?

- Despair (Think that Christ is not coming back. [2Pet 3:4](#), [Acts 1:11](#))
- Deny (Pretend that Christ has already returned. [2The 2:1-3](#))
- Wait (Rest, trust, watch, pray, witness. [Luke 21:34-36](#), [1The 4:13-18](#), [Titus 2:13](#))

15-Sunday

Sunday changed everything, but not in the way many people think. The disciples finally understood what Jesus meant by the seed having to die. Where there's no sacrifice, there's no harvest ([John 12:24](#)).

What got released on Sunday was hope. It wasn't hope that life would be easy. It was hope that called people to die to selfishness, sin, fear, and greed that a greater self might be born ([Luke 9:23-24](#), [Rom 6:11](#), [Gal 2:20](#)).

Epilogue

Who is this man? Humanity and divinity intersect in this one man. He became like us so that we might become like Him ([Php 2:5-8](#)).

Whatever your ideas about religion, you can become a student of Jesus. That's a good place to start. You have to go through tomorrow anyway. Try it with Jesus.