

Jesus Unmasked will
silence any Bible critic.
—KEN HAM

Jesus Unmasked

The Truth
Will Shock You



Todd Friel
Host of Wretched Radio & T.V.

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What others are saying about *Jesus Unmasked* . . .

A highly-readable book about the most important person ever — Jesus the Christ.

— David Wheaton
author and host, *The Christian Worldview*

Jesus Unmasked will blast a bright light into a dark and dying world. Give *Jesus Unmasked* to the atheist in your life.

— Ray Comfort

I love the wit and freshness of Todd Friel's teaching, and how he doesn't flinch in the face of hard truths. His love of Scripture and passion for sound doctrine always come through — even when he is wisecracking. But he is at his very best when explaining thorny but important theological questions. That's why I'm so excited about this book. No matter where you are in the Christian walk, you'll find *Jesus Unmasked* a profitable and spiritually uplifting study.

— Phil Johnson

Jesus Unmasked will silence any Bible critic.

— Ken Ham
Answers in Genesis

Todd Friel has written the book you always wanted to give to your friends. *Jesus Unmasked* is clear, direct, and simple all without ever being shallow. Get several copies so you can share them with friends who need Jesus.

— Tedd Tripp
author and conference speaker

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Thank you

Proverbs 31:10 asks, “An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.” Well, I found one.

It is not uncommon for someone to meet my wife and inform me, “You married above your pay grade.” Indeed. This book would not have been possible without Susan. She let me spend Christmas vacation writing this. I didn’t even have to put up decorations. That is a good wife.

It was my wife who introduced me to the fascinating study of types and shadows years ago. She took a Kay Arthur Inductive Bible Study on the Book of Hebrews where she learned much about the Old Testament tabernacle and the rich imagery of covenants. I owe her, and Kay Arthur, many thanks for the chapters on the tabernacle and covenant. If you are in search of a great women’s Bible study, you can’t do better than Kay Arthur.

Thank you, Sweetheart. I mean my wife, not Kay Arthur.

Thank you to my wonderful daughters for volunteering to proofread Dad’s work and offering their very helpful feedback. They didn’t even charge me.

Okay, I lied, they didn’t volunteer. I duct-taped them to a chair and forced them to read this. But they are still great kids and I love them to pieces.

I would also like to thank Starbucks for all of the electricity they gave to me with their overpriced but supposedly environmentally friendly coffee while I typed away. Oh, and thanks for the attitude.

Thanks to Ray Comfort for having the aggressive idea to travel to 13 European countries in 13 days for the *Way of the Master* TV show. Ray assigned me the task of visiting monuments of the great Protestant reformers. I left for Europe with a profound commitment to truth. I returned from Europe with a burning passion to defend that truth.

Our Protestant forefathers were strangled, quartered, and burned for the truth. Thanks to Ray, I am willing to do the same.

Additionally, thank you to all of my teachers throughout the years who lived for the truth. This entire book is a compilation of what I have learned from godly men who dedicated their lives that others would have “the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3).

Thanks also to Tim Dudley for flying to Atlanta to enlist me to the New Leaf team. It is a joy to work with the entire pile of leaves.

Finally and firstly, thank You to my Savior. Thank You for rekindling my heart as I wrote this. May You use it so others might know You, the Truth.

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Introduction

Truth Is Like a Baseball Game

From approximately A.D. 33 until approximately A.D. 1400, a baseball umpire would call 'em as they are.

From approximately A.D. 1400 until approximately 1989, a baseball umpire would call 'em as he sees them.

From approximately 1989 until today, a baseball umpire would call them and that is what they are.

Notice the difference?

Pre-modernism: Approximately A.D. 33 until Approximately 1400

During the pre-modern era, Western civilization generally acknowledged the existence of a divine being as revealed in the Bible. Pre-modern people accepted the teachings of the Church and Scripture with little skepticism. “God said it, that settles it.”

But something changed. Around the 1400s, skeptics began to question the existence of God and the truthfulness of the Holy Bible. Philosophers from Machiavelli to Voltaire paved the way for society to question the authority of the Scriptures.

The Protestant Reformation contributed to this new way of thinking. As reformers questioned and defied the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, laypeople began to believe they could do the same. This ushered in the modern era of empiricism. Man and science became the supreme authorities while God and the Church began to take a back seat.

The Modern Era: Approximately 1400 until Approximately 1989

As the centuries marched along and technology advanced (especially during the late 19th-century industrial revolution), man was feeling rather confident that he alone possessed the truth. The modern era between 1400 and 1989 was the heyday of man. Empiricism and science were the kings of truth. Unfortunately, four W's showed up and wrecked everything.

World War I was the bloodiest conflict in human history. Unfortunately, what was supposed to be the "war to end all wars" was just a warm-up for the greatest blood bath ever: World War II. Suddenly man's confidence in man was rocked. If we are supposed to know the answers to everything, why is the world so dangerous and unstable? Man's skepticism of man had begun.

Postmodernism: Approximately 1989 until Today

By the end of the 20th century, culture concluded that humans are not the repositories of truth we once imagined. When the Berlin Wall came tumbling down in 1989, man made a decision, "We don't know what truth is."

Talk about a conundrum. If man doesn't know the truth and the Bible doesn't know the truth, then who does? Answer: nobody and everybody. We are all right and nobody is wrong. Truth is no longer objective but subjective. Welcome to the post-modern world.

Our present postmodern age sounds like this:

- > I don't agree with you, but I don't believe you are wrong.
- > As long as it works for you, then it is true.
- > Even though we completely disagree, we are both right.
- > Truth is out, truthy is in.

A Bench Is a Watermelon

Several years ago I visited a seminary. I don't want to name names, so let's just say the school is called Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia. I struck up a conversation with a fellow who was studying for his master's degree in theology. I sensed he was a postmodern.

"Sir," I asked while pointing at a bench, "what is that?"

He replied, "It is a bench."

"I think it is a watermelon. Am I wrong?"

The fellow replied quite naturally, "No, you are not wrong."

Two Plus Two Equals Whatever

Again, not to name names, let's just say I was at Georgia Tech talking to a young man. I smelled postmodernism.

"What is two plus two?" I asked.

"Four."

"I think it is seven. Am I wrong?"

"No."

"Then you think I am right?"

"No."

"Then you think I am wrong?"

"No."

"Then you think I am right?"

"No."

Here comes the punch line: this fellow was studying to become an engineer. Remind me to never drive over one of his bridges.

Truth vs. Preferences

Truth is definitive. Preferences are not.

Truth is factual. Preferences are opinions.

Truth is provable. Preferences cannot be tested.

Quiz Time

True or false? Cleveland is in Ohio.

True or false? John Kennedy was assassinated.

True or false? John Kennedy had the best hair of any president.

True or false? Elvis wore increasingly tight white jumps.

True or false? Elvis was the best singer ever.

True or false? Penicillin unplugs your drain.

True or false? Penicillin fights bacteria.

True or false? Monet painted in the impressionist style.

True or false? Monet is a better painter than Degas.

You see, some things are factual while other things are preferential. Some things can be proven through scientific methods or observation, while other things simply are not provable. Things that are not provable are merely preferences.

Is coffee made from coffee beans? Absolutely.

Does coffee taste good? It depends on who is drinking it.

Truth can be tested and verified because truth will always be true. Truth does not change. Truth is always the same, but not all things can be proven.

What about Religion?

Postmoderns are quick to say, “Your religion is true if it works for you.”

Umm, no it’s not. Just because something “works” does not mean it is true. A convicted criminal on death row can get through the day believing he is going to be released tomorrow, but his belief is misplaced; his faith is wrong. It may “work,” but it is not correct.

Many cultists believe that their faith has helped them, and perhaps it has, but that does not mean a belief in Zeus or a carved idol is correct.

If I believe that Oprah Winfrey is the goddess of the universe, like millions do, and I will spend eternity with her in a Chicago high-rise if I read each of her magazines cover to cover and say, “Stedman is groovy” three times, will I be spending eternity in the Windy City on the 50th floor with O? Of course not, I would be wrong.

Let’s say that I really, really, really believed that. Would the intensity of my belief send me to eternity with Oprah? Nope. Intensity of faith does not make it so.

What if a lot of people believed the same thing? What if there were a billion Oprah-ites? Would we all spend forever with Ms. Winfrey? Nein. Majority vote doesn’t make something right.

Can you prefer one religion over another? Yes, you can; you can prefer anything you want. You can like one thing more than another, but that does not make the object of your affection true.

- > You can prefer that 4 times 4 is 24, but you are wrong.
- > You can prefer injecting a shot of Drano to cure lockjaw, but you are wrong.
- > You can prefer plugging your computer into the cat, but you are wrong.

You can prefer being any religion you choose, but your preference does not make it true. You can prefer being a Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, or Mormon, but that does not make your religion correct. Faith can be misplaced.

So how do we know what religion, if any, is actually true? We must examine their claims and determine if they are true or not. Can that be done? Absolutely.

Truth Is Not an Opinion

Two thousand years ago, a Roman governor dismissively asked Jesus Christ, “What is truth?” Unfortunately, Pontius Pilate did not ask that question with a genuine desire to hear the answer. Had he waited for a response, he would likely have heard what Jesus often claimed about Himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

For centuries, the Western world accepted His answer, but recently skeptics and liberal theologians have disagreed with Jesus. Many have offered a different understanding of Jesus ranging from a good teacher to a figment of man’s imagination. Many have sought to put a mask on Jesus of Nazareth.

Why Bother?

Why should you take the time to encounter the real Jesus Christ?

- > He changed the calendar from B.C. to A.D., He must be kind of important.
- > He has more followers than the Rolling Stones, Beatles, and Miley Cyrus combined.
- > He claimed that He will personally sentence you to a room with a view on the lake of fire if you fail to believe in Him. A pretty serious accusation.

No other religious leader besides Jesus Christ makes exclusive claims on the truth. No other guru claims that his system is correct and you better believe it or you will suffer eternal consequences. The biblical Jesus does.

Let’s Make a Deal

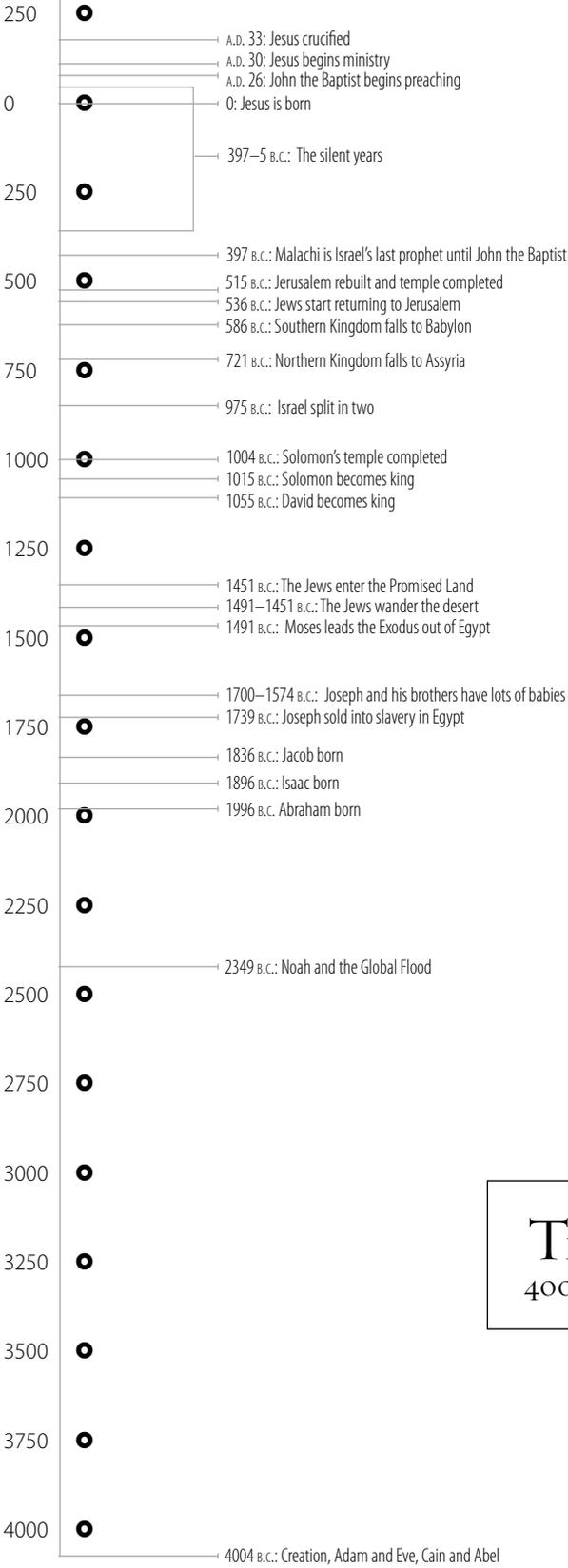
If you take the time to read this book, you will learn:

- > What Jesus believed about Himself
- > Why Jesus’ contemporaries wanted to murder this “good teacher”

- > What the Bible is actually about. It will make sense, whether you believe it or not.

If you take the time to read this book, you can draw your own conclusions about the most influential man in history. You can determine if Jesus is merely a role model or the Redeemer. You can determine if Jesus is a myth or the Messiah. You can determine if Jesus is *a* way or *the* way.

Prepare to see the unmasked Jesus and discover who this man really is.



Timeline

4004 B.C. — A.D. 33

“*He came out of nowhere, yet in three years He became the talk of the town.*”



Chapter One

Who Is This Man?

The city was buzzing. This was not the eager anticipation of an upcoming special event attended by a few ticket holders. This was the electricity that comes from a tragedy that affects everyone in the country. Think Kennedy assassination. Think 9/11. Think stock market crash of 2007.

Jesus Christ was dead. Everyone in Jerusalem knew He had been horrifically beaten and executed. They witnessed the trial with their own eyes and saw Him writhing on a Cross. Eyewitnesses watched Him die.

His naked body was removed from the Cross and placed in a tomb, but three days later His corpse was missing. Rumors raged. There was only one conversation that preoccupied everyone in Jerusalem, “Where is the body of Jesus the Christ?”

The Most Famous Man in Israel

Jesus of Nazareth was undeniably the most famous man of His day. If there had been gossip tabloids in A.D. 33, pictures of Jesus Christ would have been splattered on every cover.

- > There He goes again!
- > Jesus rebukes the Pharisees. To their faces!
- > No more sick people in Israel. What will Jesus do now?
- > Jesus Christ receives death threats.

He came out of nowhere, yet in three years He became the talk of the town. Why? What made Jesus the most popular man in Israel?

Illnesses Obliterated

Imagine a man who could heal people. Not a flaky televangelist charlatan, but an actual miracle worker. Now imagine this man traveled throughout the country healing every single sick person who was brought to Him.

Hospitals would be emptied. Handicap parking signs would be removed. Your loved one would be restored to complete and total health.

That was Jesus, the miracle worker from Galilee who healed those with faith or without faith. He healed everyone. Totally. Freely. Instantaneously.

While the sun was setting, **all those** who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on **each one of them**, He was **healing them** (Luke 4:40).

During the three years of Jesus' ministry, illness was effectively wiped out in Israel. No blindness. No deafness. No cancer. No kidney disease. No intellectual disability. No shingles. No blocked arteries. No muscular dystrophy. No Parkinson's disease. No cerebral palsy.

Gone. All disease was obliterated.

If you or a family member had not been healed by Jesus, you certainly knew someone who had. Nobody's life was unaffected by Jesus Christ. Everyone in Israel wanted to know, "Who exactly is this man?"

What He Taught

Not only was Jesus a genuine miracle worker, He was a teacher who said things that shocked those who came to hear Him preach. Jesus said things that were scandalous.

Here is the scene: Jesus was in a house teaching as crowds from all over Israel gathered. The home was filled to capacity. In the meantime, friends of a paralyzed man carried their crippled friend on a mat to place him in front of Jesus in hopes that He would heal their loved one. As they approached the house, the crowds were so thick they couldn't get to the man who was the focus of everyone's attention. Another plan was required.

The friends climbed to the roof of the home, removed the shingles and lowered their paralyzed friend on his mat in front of Jesus. What Jesus said next was scandalous. “Friend, your sins are forgiven you” (Luke 5:20).

Only God can forgive sins. Who did this man think He was? God?

How He Taught

Jesus said and did things that were shocking, but He also spoke and behaved in a way that was different than other preachers and teachers.

When Jesus had finished these words, the **crowds were amazed** at His teaching; for He was teaching them as **one having authority**, and not as their scribes (Matt. 7:28–29).

When little children were brought to Him for a blessing, Jesus sat them on His knee. This was not the behavior of the other religious leaders in Israel. The Pharisees and Sadducees wore splendid robes and would never stoop to hug children and babies. Jesus did. Who is this man?

The Last Week of His Life

After three years of preaching, teaching, and healing, Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem on Monday to celebrate the Passover. Without a single tweet, the entire city knew Jesus was coming to town.

Throngs gathered as Jesus entered the city on a donkey. Hundreds of thousands of people lined the streets and spread their coats on the road as an act of homage. Palm branches were cut from trees and placed at the feet of the mule.

When He had entered Jerusalem, **all the city** was stirred, saying, **“Who is this?”** (Matt. 21:10).

Just four days later, the same crowds who gathered to welcome Him with chants of “Hosanna” gathered in front of Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, chanting, “Crucify Him. Crucify Him.” Pilate honored their request and had Jesus whipped, mangled, and crucified. The man who entered Jerusalem triumphantly on Monday was disfigured and dead on Friday.

Three Days Later

On Sunday morning, rumors were swirling. The body of Jesus was missing from His tomb. What happened to Him? Was His body stolen? Who did it? Was His death a hoax? Did He rise from the dead the way He had raised others?

The city was buzzing, “Who is this man?”