

How Do We Know Jesus is Truly the Son of God?

Steve Hemler, President



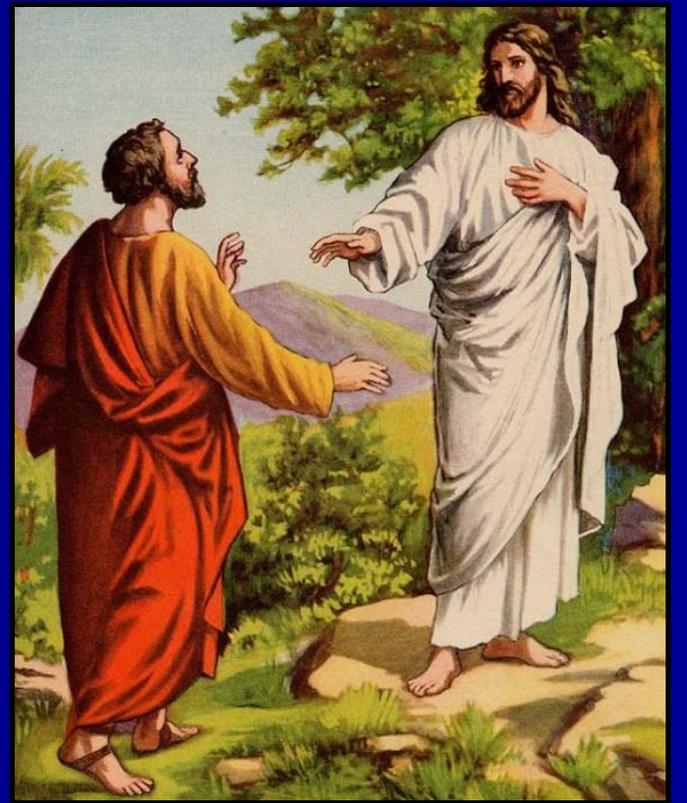
Jesus' Divinity & Resurrection

- Jews and Muslims deny the divinity and resurrection of Jesus
- Over half of American adults do NOT believe Jesus is God
 - Just a great teacher
- How can we know that Jesus is the **divine** Son of God who really rose from the dead?

Presentation Outline

Is Jesus the Son of God?

1. Jesus Claimed to be God
2. Jesus Spoke as God
3. Jesus Performed Miracles
4. Jesus Rose from the Dead



1. Jesus Claimed to be God

- “I am the bread of life. **I came down from heaven** so that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life. The living Father sent me.” (John 6:35, 38, 40, 57)
- “Why do you say that I’m dishonoring God because I said, **‘I am the Son of God’**? God set me apart for this holy purpose and has sent me into the world.” (John 10:36)
- **“I and the Father are one.”** (John 10:30)
- “The woman said to him, “I know that **Messiah is coming** (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things.” Jesus said to her, **“I who speak to you am he.”** (John 4:25-26)

Jesus Claimed to be God

- One must understand the cultural references of a 1st century Jew to get them
 - “Luke, I am your father.”
- Jesus often **called Himself** the “**Son of Man**”, which is a reference to Daniel’s dream:
 - “with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a **son of man**,
And to him was given dominion
and glory and kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion” (Daniel 7:13-14)



“I am the true vine”

JOHN 15:1-5



“I am the bread of life”

JOHN 6:35-48



“I am the way, the truth and the life”

JOHN 14:6



“I am the light of the world”

JOHN 8:12; 9:5

The seven **“I AM”** statements of Jesus



“I am the resurrection and the life”

JOHN 11:25



“I am the good shepherd”

JOHN 10:11-14



“I am the gate”

JOHN 10:7

Jesus Claimed to be God

- And in other gospels:
 - “Again the High Priest questioned him, ‘Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed God?’ ‘**I AM,**’ answered Jesus.” (Mark 14:61-62, Luke 22:70)
- Why are these “I AM” statements important?
 - When Moses met God in the burning bush and asked Him His name, God said, “**I AM WHO I AM**” (Exodus 3:14)

Jesus Claimed to be God

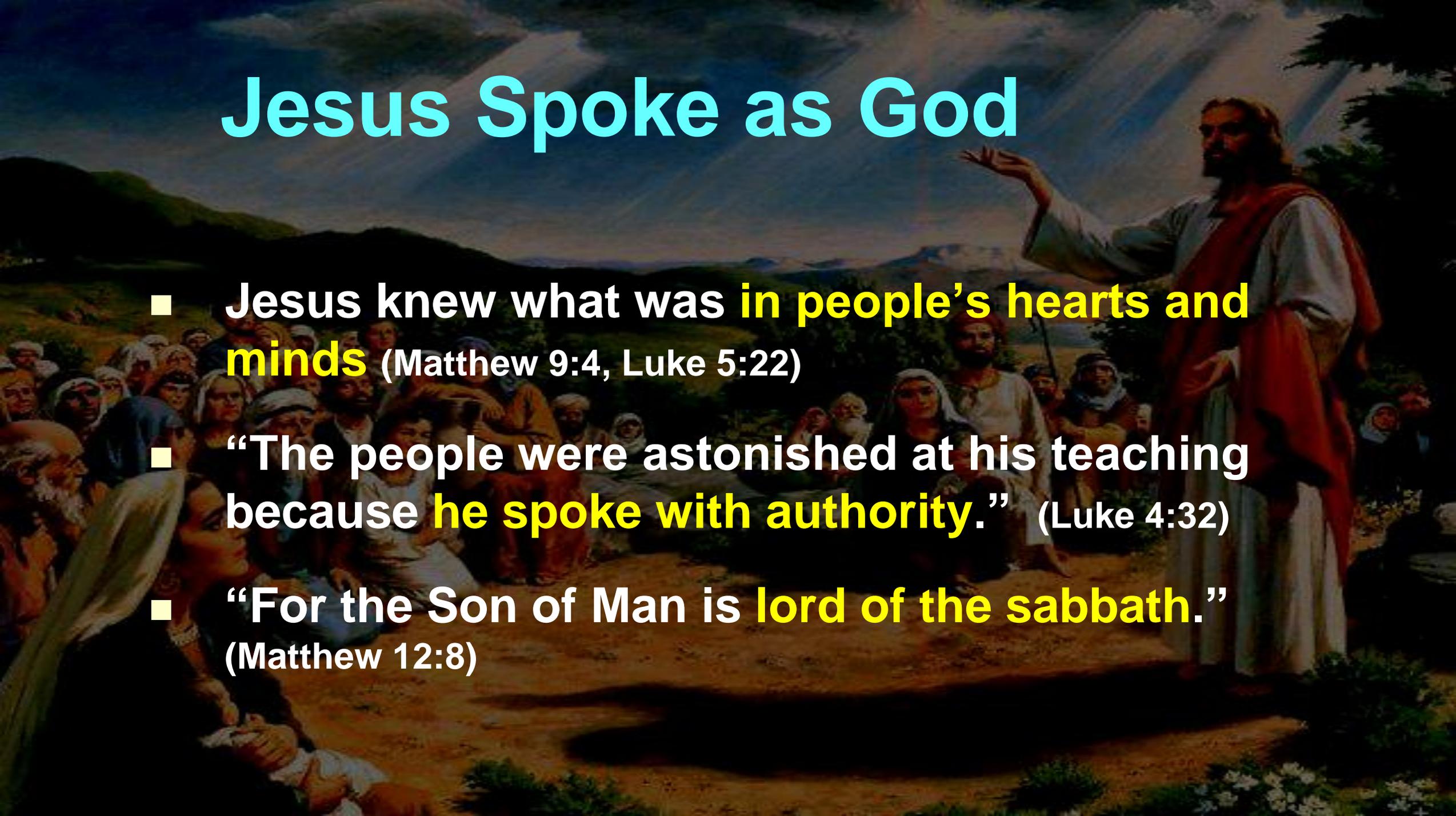
- **Why was Jesus crucified?**
- **Because the Jews of His time understood that Jesus was claiming equality with God = blasphemy**
 - **“Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2:7)**
 - **“The Jews answered him, ‘We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God’.” (John 10:33)**
 - **“Then the high priest tore his robes, and said, ‘He has uttered blasphemy. Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy’.” (Matthew 26:65)**

A painting of Jesus with long brown hair and a beard, wearing a white robe. He has his arms raised in a gesture of blessing or teaching. He is surrounded by a crowd of people, some looking at him with interest and others with concern. The background is a soft, hazy landscape.

2. Jesus Spoke as God

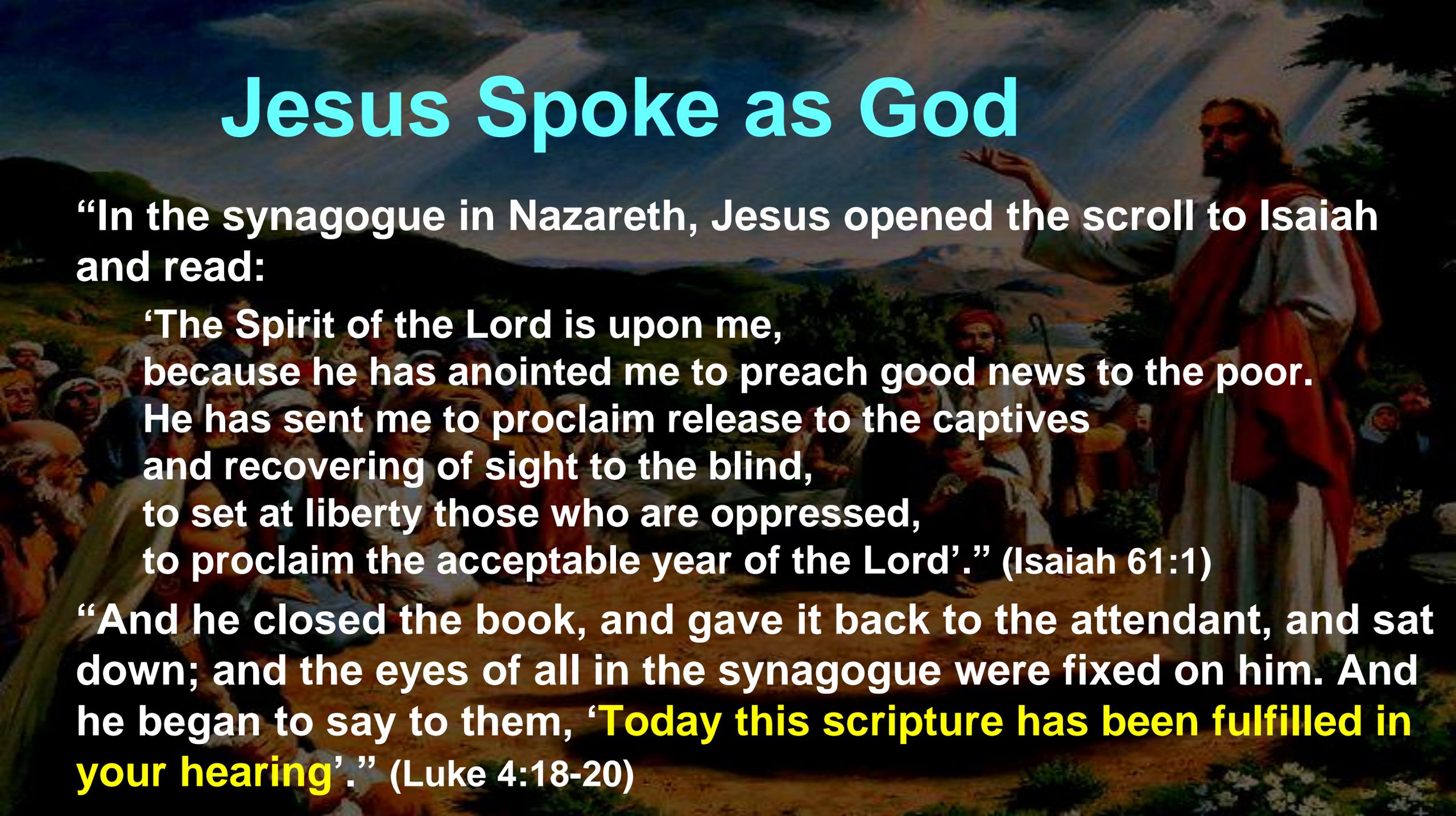
- “I give you a new **commandment**: love one another.” (John 13:34)
- “Jesus said, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ Some of the scribes asked themselves, ‘Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. **Who but God alone can forgive sins?**’ ‘The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth.’ Jesus said” (Mark 2:5-7, 10)
- ***Video: How forgiving sins supports Jesus’ claims of divinity***

Jesus Spoke as God

A religious painting depicting Jesus standing on the right, gesturing with his right hand towards a large crowd of people seated on the ground. The background features a landscape with rolling hills, mountains, and a rainbow in the sky. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a bright sky.

- Jesus knew what was **in people's hearts and minds** (Matthew 9:4, Luke 5:22)
- “The people were astonished at his teaching because **he spoke with authority.**” (Luke 4:32)
- “For the Son of Man is **lord of the sabbath.**” (Matthew 12:8)

Jesus Spoke as God

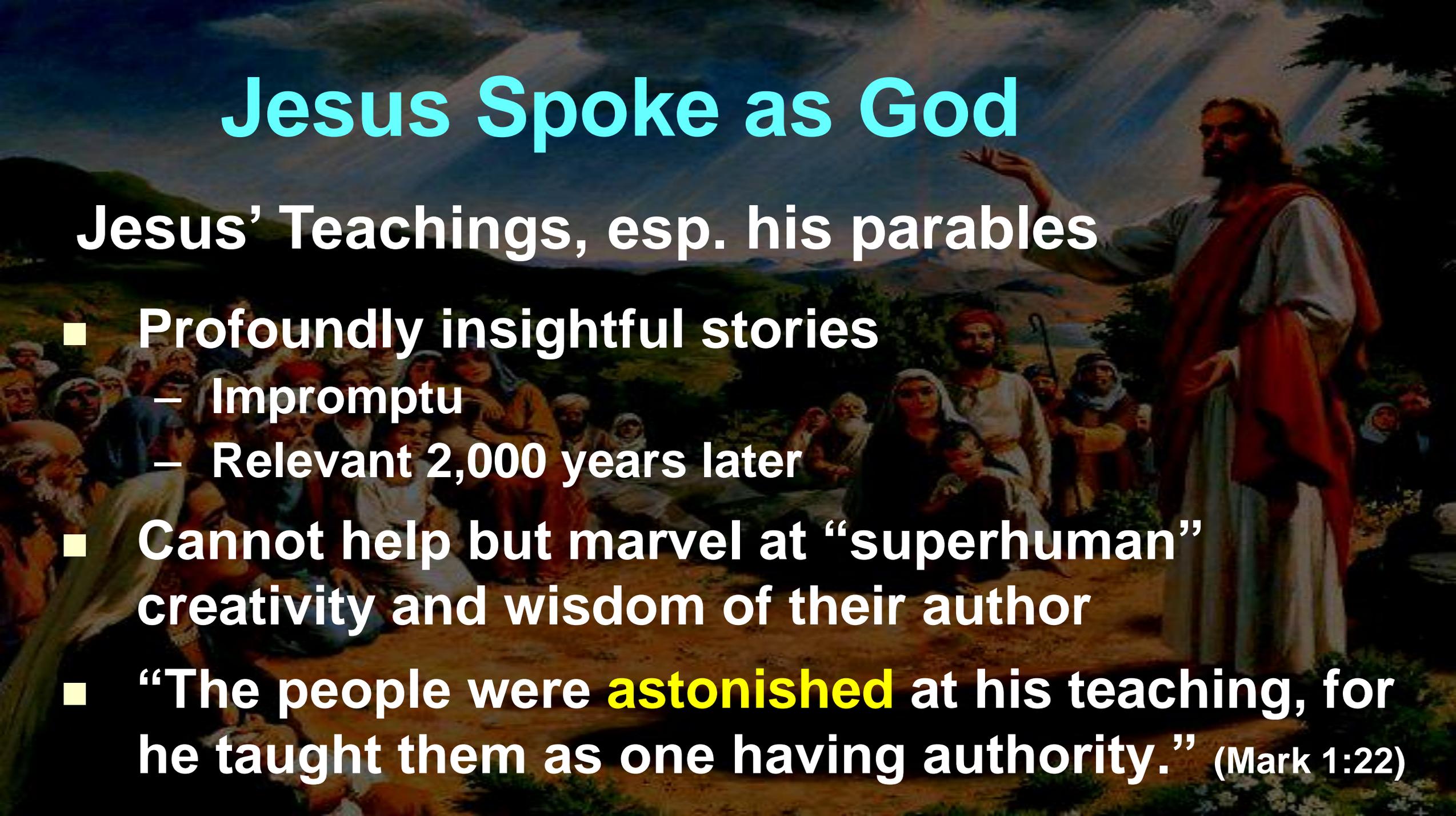


“In the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus opened the scroll to Isaiah and read:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord’.” (Isaiah 61:1)

“And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, **‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing’.**” (Luke 4:18-20)

Jesus Spoke as God

A painting depicting Jesus standing on the right, gesturing with his right hand towards a large crowd of people seated on the ground. The background shows a landscape with mountains and a rainbow in the sky. The scene is set outdoors, likely in a rural or mountainous area.

Jesus' Teachings, esp. his parables

- Profoundly insightful stories
 - Impromptu
 - Relevant 2,000 years later
- Cannot help but marvel at “superhuman” creativity and wisdom of their author
- “The people were **astonished** at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority.” (Mark 1:22)

3. Jesus Performed Miracles

“Jesus stood up and commanded the wind, ‘Be quiet!’ and he said to the waves, ‘Be still!’ The wind died down, and there was a great calm... But they were terribly afraid and began to say to one another, **‘Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’**”

(Mark 4:39,41)

Examples of Jesus' Miracles

- **Changed water into wine** (John 2:6-10)
- **Healed diseases** (Matthew 4:23,24; 8:3 & Luke 6:17-19; 17:14)
- **Healed the paralytic** (Mark 2:3-12)
- **Raised the dead** (Matthew 9:25 and John 11:43-44)
- **Restored sight to the blind** (Matthew 9:27-30 and John 9:1-7)
- **Cured the deaf** (Mark 7:32-35)
- **Fed the multitudes** (Matthew 14:15-21; 15:32-38)
- **Walked on water** (Matthew 14:25-27)
- **Commanded nature** (Matthew 8:24-27 and Mark 4:39)

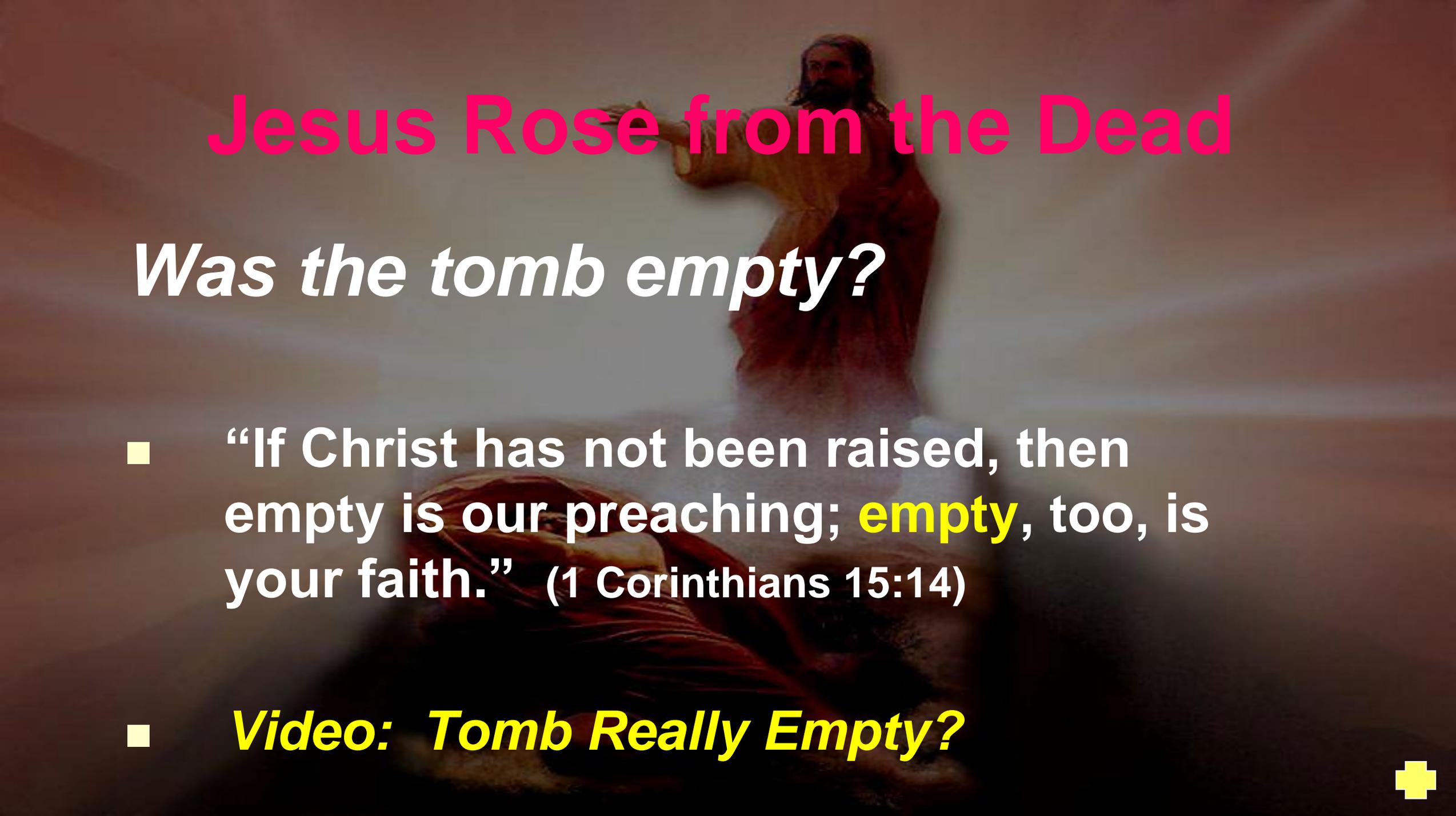
Video: Jesus' miracles testify to his divinity



4. Jesus Rose from the Dead

1. *Was the tomb empty?*
2. *Did Jesus really die?*
3. *Could the Resurrection have been a deliberate lie or conspiracy?*
4. *Is the Resurrection a myth or legend?*

Jesus Rose from the Dead



Was the tomb empty?

- “If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; **empty**, too, is your faith.” (1 Corinthians 15:14)
- ***Video: Tomb Really Empty?***





Jesus Rose from the Dead

Did Jesus really die?

- **Swoon Theory: Jesus did not die on the cross, but revived while in the tomb**
- ***Video: How we can know that Jesus really died on the cross***

Jesus Rose from the Dead

Did Jesus really die?

Medical and historical evidence

- Expertise of Romans and Roman law
 - Severe beating and scourging
 - Not break legs, but pierce side with a spear
- Move large stone with pierced hands?
 - Walk on pierced feet?
- If Jesus did revive, would have been a **battered, bleeding pulp of a man** who would have been **pitied**, not worshiped

Jesus Rose from the Dead

Could the Resurrection have been a deliberate lie or conspiracy?

- Apostles could have stolen Jesus' body from the tomb and then promoted a deliberate lie that he rose from the dead
- ***Video: Stolen Body Theory***

Jesus Rose from the Dead

Could the Resurrection have been a deliberate lie or conspiracy?

- What would Apostles have to gain?
- None ever denied Jesus' Resurrection
 - Even when faced with death
- People don't give their lives for what they know is a lie

Jesus Rose from the Dead

Is the Resurrection a myth or legend?

- Did Resurrection stories evolve over time and become more elaborate as they were told and re-told?
- *Video: Resurrection stories not a myth or legend*

... τα γὰρ δὲ λέγει - εἰς τὸ ἴδιον ...
... ἡμετέρας ἰσχυρῶς ...

... ἀποκρίθη ἡμετέροις ...
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Jesus Rose from the Dead

Is the Resurrection a myth or legend?

- **Not enough time for myth to develop**
 - Several generations need to pass before added mythological elements can be mistaken as fact
- **Details distinguish Gospels from myth**
 - Women first witnesses to Resurrection
 - Testimony considered unreliable at that time

Jesus Rose from the Dead

Summary of alternatives:

- **Jesus really died on the cross**
- **Not deliberate lie or conspiracy**
- **Not myth or legend**



Jesus Rose from the Dead

Transformed Lives of His Followers

- From fear**FUL** to fear**LESS**
 - How can this radical transformation be explained if Jesus did not appear to them after he rose from the dead?
- Quote from *The Case for Easter* by Lee Strobel:

And they were willing to spend the rest of their lives proclaiming this, without any payoff from a human point of view. They faced a life of hardship. They often went without food, slept exposed to the elements, were ridiculed, beaten, imprisoned. And finally, most of them were executed in torturous ways. For what? For good intentions? No, because **they were convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that they had seen Jesus Christ alive from the dead.**”

Conclusion

“If Jesus is not God become man, then an unbelievable miracle happened: the conversion of the (western) world by the biggest lie in history and the moral transformation of lives into unselfishness, detachment from worldly pleasures, and radically new heights of holiness—all by a mere myth.”

- St. Thomas Aquinas

Summary

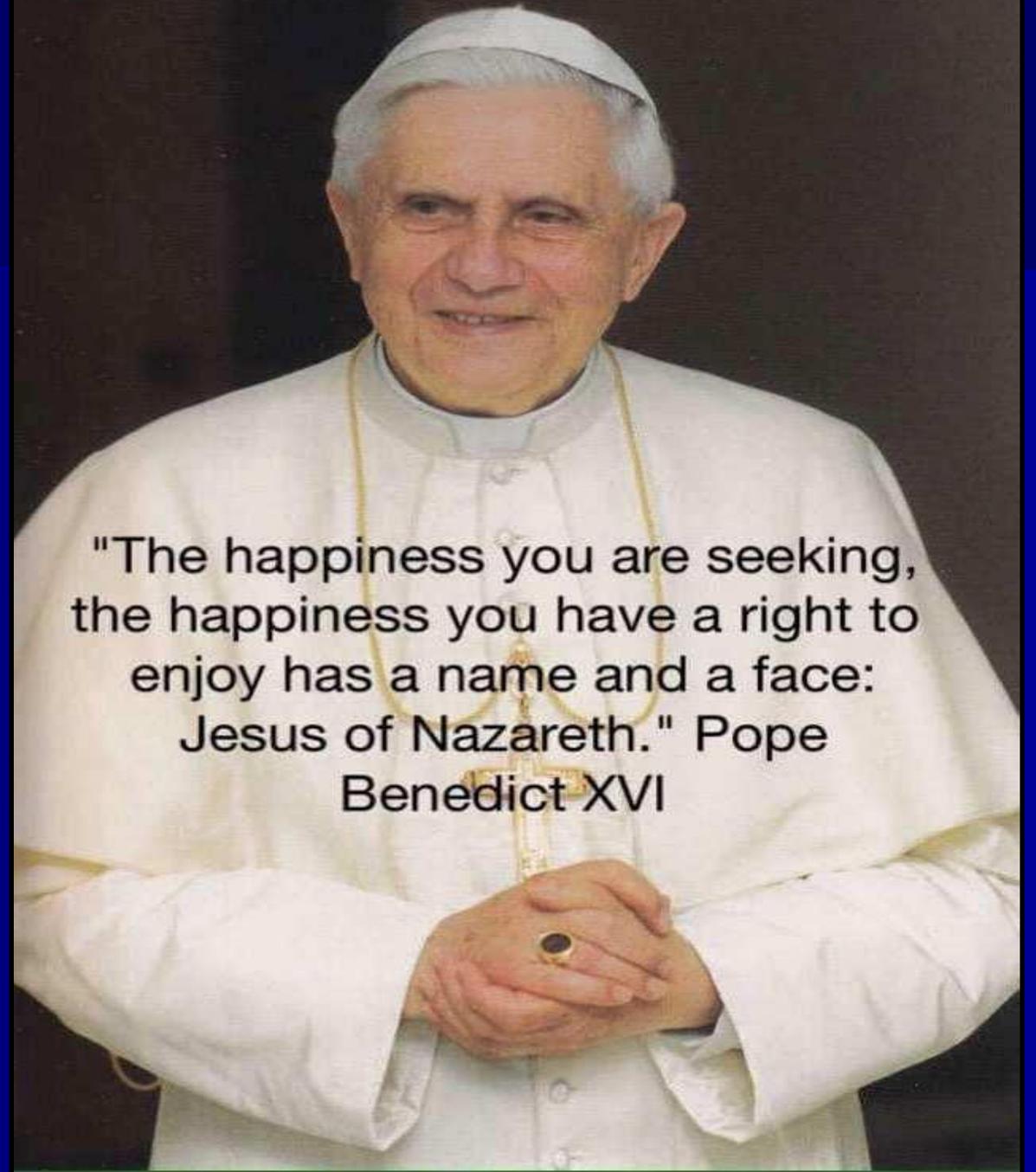
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“It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you.” -Pope St. John Paul II



"The happiness you are seeking, the happiness you have a right to enjoy has a name and a face: Jesus of Nazareth." Pope Benedict XVI

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