

## God's world – Session 3

# Jesus, the Saviour of the World

### The open heart of God

Writing of the depth of feeling possible between lovers, Shakespeare reflected:

*Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,  
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken,  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.*

Sonnet 116

If that is true of human love, it is far more profoundly true of the love which the true and living God has for his creation. For although the original sin had catastrophic consequences, unleashing the power of evil in the world, there is one thing which did not change – God's passionate commitment to his world and his people. A less poetic but even more profound author finds the greatest love of all, not here on earth, but in heaven – "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us ..." (1 John 4.10a). It is the heart of God that is the start of the good news, the good news which undoes the bad news of sin and evil and death.

And as day follows night, so the thought of the Apostle John moves directly to the sending of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, as the central content of that good news – "... and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 John 4.10b). One of our conclusions from the last session was that we needed a Saviour, and the Apostle John here testifies precisely to the sending of that Saviour.

Now, human salvation is a mighty work, yet the outcome of this sending of Jesus, God's Son is even greater than St John describes here. As we saw last time, our need for salvation is part of an even bigger catastrophe – the hijacking of God's world by sin and Evil and death, ruining God's gracious and righteous purposes for life and peace. And even deeper than this, the heart of the issue is the dreadful displacement of God from his rightful place at the centre of our lives and all life, He who is the giver of life. In other words, as we explore the contours of the 'career' of Jesus, sent by God, we will need to keep one eye on his impact for us and for our salvation, wiping away the problem; and another eye his positive work of establishing the solution, the loving Lordship of the Creator, what Jesus called the Kingdom of God.

One final point about the origin of this gospel/good news. Mirroring the Father's love for his world, Jesus' time amongst us – and especially his death and resurrection – was not only

obedience to the Father, but also a consequence of his own willing decision. It was a free gift of grace, out of love for the world. At one point, he said that it was he who laid down his life, not another who took it from him, and certainly he seems very determined to bring on the confrontation that led to his death. One of his biographers, Luke, commented that “he set his face towards Jerusalem”, knowing that what lay ahead was great suffering, rejection by the elders, chief priests and scribes, and death. Whatever we might think of the ‘career moves’ that Jesus made, it was he who made them, deliberately, lovingly, graciously.

## The war of the worlds

How then does the Bible explain the saving significance of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus?

First, the biggest picture of them all!

### **Read Romans 5.12-21.**

Rom. 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned — 13 sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. 14 Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

Rom. 5:15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man’s trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. 16 And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. 17 If, because of the one man’s trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Rom. 5:18 Therefore just as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. 19 For just as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. 20 But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord

This is a dense passage in its details, but the basic picture is a clear comparison. Who reigns in the world as a result of ‘the one man’s sin’, and what are the consequences of this?

Who reigns in the world as a result of ‘the one man’s act of righteousness’, and what are the consequences of this?

The first thing to say concerns the scope of this gospel. It is truly cosmic in scale, and is fundamentally about authority – who or what will have and exercise authority (or as the Apostle Paul puts it, “dominion”) in this world? We saw that the nature of sin is the rejection of the loving, rightful authority of God. And therefore the disobedience of the first humans left humanity and the world in a deep chasm, where sin and death and condemnation reign or have universal and terrible dominion; nothing and no-one is unaffected.

That’s where we finished last week, looking at the Dark Days. The mission of Christ, as it is presented in this section of Paul’s letter to the Romans, was nothing less than to undo the damage done, to break the reign of evil in the world and to free the creation by a ‘super-abounding’ act of righteousness. By this work of Christ, grace and life and justification now ‘reign’; and that ‘act of righteousness’ consists in the whole matrix of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Notice the little phrase in verse 6, “following many trespasses”. That’s an important clue that the achievement of Jesus is not to scrap what God had made and start again. Rather, it is to go into the very heart of the problem, where trespasses have multiplied like an out-of-control virus, and to deal with the problem from within, utterly and completely.

But unscrambling the egg is always a challenge - it’s far harder to undo something gone wrong, than it is to do something wrong in the first place. How does Jesus bring about the reign of life and peace? To answer that question, we need to go back to the beginning, all the way!

## Life lived right

Tracing out a family tree is a popular hobby amongst people as they get older. Perhaps it’s because they understand that who they are, and the kind of life that they have lived, has often been shaped to a fair degree by their family background. However, even when that’s taken into account, their life begins when they are born, and is not passed down to them from someone else. The history of Jesus, however, begins not with his birth at Bethlehem on the first Christmas day. The only realistic assessment of Jesus is that he is the Son of God, who (as the Apostle John puts it in the opening chapter of his gospel) “in the beginning was with God and was God ... and who became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1.1, 14). This God/man truly was divine, so that all that can be said of the God the Father can be said of him. In other words, there is no remainder, some extra bit of glory or authority that God the Father has and which Jesus doesn’t. And at the same time, and without compromising that divinity, Jesus was also truly human. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews puts it emphatically – Jesus shared flesh and blood, like his brothers and sisters in every respect (Hebrews 2.14, 17), yet without sin (Hebrews 4.15). And the divine/human life Jesus lived was full of grace and truth, life lived the way it was meant to be lived, in thankful obedience to and trust in his Heavenly Father, always preferring his Father’s will to his own.

This is the right context to properly understand the teaching of Jesus. Some are happy to recognise in Jesus a fine, even the greatest, moral and spiritual teacher, but are reluctant to acknowledge that he is anything more than a human being. However, this just won’t work. His teaching and his

understanding of himself as uniquely God's own Son simply go hand in hand. To take away either aspect deflates the other of all its power. For example, the Jesus who taught "in everything do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7.12) is the same Jesus who said a couple of chapters later, "All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matthew 11.27); or again, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ..." (Matthew 28.18). In other words, the power and the insight of the teaching of Jesus is a direct function of the identity of Jesus as God's Son.

C.S. Lewis, the English author of the Narnia series, put it sharply in his book *Mere Christianity*:

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 a 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 patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

What that means is that this lived life of righteousness in words and deeds, obedient in every regard and resisting real temptation, was not merely incidental, as though the real issue was to get on and die. Nor was it merely a pre-requisite, as though the cosmic calculus simply required a perfect specimen to pay the price for our redemption and so Jesus did the minimum amount of time. Rather Jesus' life, where words and deeds went hand in hand, was the first strokes of the brush, the initial cuts of the sculpture, carving out a new way of being human. His life was a new way of being a child of God, the starting point for the reign of grace. And what was begun in his life was brought to its climax in his death, and its completion in his resurrection.

## Death on the cross

One Christian writer has spoken of Jesus' death in this way: "That Christ died is history; that Christ died *for us* is the gospel!" Every day, thousands and thousands of people die, and most of the time, they don't die for the sake of anything or anyone – they just die, as the terrible power of Death chalks up another victory. The Christian conviction about Jesus is that his death was different.

The idea of someone dying *for others* is not so strange. In his book, *The First Day of the Somme*, Martin Middlebrook recounts the heroic actions of one man who gave his life for others:

'In Thiepval Wood, Billy McFadzean and his fellow bombers were making their final preparations in a short, very narrow assembly trench. Boxes of grenades had been opened and the bombs were being distributed. Shells were falling here and there in the wood as the Germans searched for likely targets in the Ulster Division positions. The shelling had not

yet stripped all the foliage from the trees and the bright, early morning sun threw dappled shadows over the Belfast men as they worked. Suddenly a box of grenades fell to the floor of the trench. No one seems to know how it happened; perhaps an explosion, closer than the rest dislodged it; perhaps it was just knocked over in the cramped trench. But the fall had knocked the pins out of two grenades. In four seconds they would explode. In that crowded, enclosed space the effect would be disastrous. While some stared in horror at the small metal objects McFadzean pushed himself forward and threw his body over the grenades. A moment later the live grenades exploded and Billy McFadzean was dead. In giving his own life, he had saved his friends, for only one other man in the trenches was slightly hurt. The shocked Ulstermen laid the shattered body carefully aside, hoping that someone would be able to bury it later, then they finished sharing out the grenades and waited sadly for the battle to begin.”

The death of Jesus was like this, in that **it had profound effects on others**. His death was not just ‘one of those things’, meaningless, the sad, final extinguishing of his life – no, his death was for something, or rather for someone(s), namely, for us. The Bible repeatedly describes Jesus as our representative and substitute in death, on our behalf and in our place – to take one typical example, “he loved us and gave himself up for us” (Ephesians 5.2). There are 2 key aspects to this death of Jesus ‘for us’.

**a) Guilty agents reconciled:** Jesus’ death was a death for sin, and human involvement with it and guilt in it. This is Jesus dealing with the agency side of sin, as discussed last chapter.

**Fill out the table by describing how the following passages depicts the death of Jesus as reconciling guilty agents by taking their place under judgment.**

Passage	How is Jesus’ death understood?
<p><b>2 Corinthians 5.14–15, 18–21</b></p> <p><u>2 Cor 5.14</u> For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. <u>15</u> And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them ... <u>18</u> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <u>19</u> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <u>20</u> So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <u>21</u> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.</p>	

**Colossians 1.19–22**

Colossians 1.19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. 21 And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him.

**1 Peter 2.22–25**

1 Peter 2.22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” 23 When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Guilt, real guilt, guilt lying heavily on the conscience, is a terrible thing. Of course, there is such a thing as false guilt, felling guilty about things which aren't really wrong at all - eating too much ice cream might be indulgent, but it is hardly a matter for guilt! But real guilt matters. Jim thought of himself as a regular enough sort of bloke; he wasn't the sharpest tool in the shed, but then again, he wasn't too bad either. That is until one night at a party he got talking with a girl he had met a few times; they seemed to be getting on, and so he got bolder and bolder, especially as the empty glasses beside him multiplied. However, it was clear the girl was not interested in taking their relationship any further. And so Jim did something he never thought he was capable of - he tried to force himself on the girl. Fortunately, they were interrupted, and she was able to escape, but the deed had been done, in his mind and intention, if not in execution. When Jim came to talk with me, the guilt in him was almost palpable. It weighed him down terribly, he couldn't eat, he wasn't sleeping, and concentrating on anything was completely beyond him. What can deal with guilt?

The fact is that guilt is almost like a debt - it stands against you, on your record, until it is erased. And to erase the debt of sin, both sides of the problem need to be wiped away - the problem as it is from God's side, his rightful anger at the wrong that has been done to him, by those who should have lived their lives in thankful obedience to him. And at the same time, the problem from our side, that we have failed, and need to find a way to make the wrong right. And the Bible speaks about the crucifixion in precisely both these terms.

On one hand, Jesus' death was him bearing the punishment that we deserve for our sin. We see this in the first of the Bible quotes, where the Apostle Paul says that our trespasses (another word for 'sins') were not counted against us, and later provides the explanation, namely that for our sake, God "made him who knew no sin (in other words, Jesus) to be sin". The meaning of this is clear - our trespasses are not counted against us, because they are counted against Jesus! What's more, this is not reluctant or unwilling on the part of Jesus, it is the outcome of his love for us all. Or again, the Apostle Peter writes that "Jesus bore our sins in his body on the cross", and the thought here is that Jesus took upon himself the consequences and responsibility for our sins, or in other words the judgment and wrath of God which we deserve. As North American author Jim Packer put it, "Jesus Christ ... took our place under judgment, and received in his own personal experience all the dimensions of the death that was our sentence, whatever these were, so laying the foundation for our pardon and immunity."

At the same time, Jesus' death is understood as a sacrifice for sin, and in particular a sacrifice which makes atonement. Atonement means "making amends, blotting out the offence, and giving satisfaction for wrong done; thus reconciling to oneself the alienated other and restoring the disrupted relationship." The background for the thought that Jesus' death was a sacrifice for sin is in the Old Testament, where an elaborate system of animal sacrifices is described. Particularly important was the blood of the animal, representing its very life, which in dramatic fashion was sprinkled around during the sacrifice ceremony. We see this aspect of sacrifice applied to Jesus' death in the middle of the three passages above, where Paul says that God has brought peace (reconciliation, at-one-ment) through the *blood* of Jesus' cross.

The question then is, how does a sacrifice make amends, make at-one-ment between estranged parties? Well, when wrongdoing interrupts a relationship, the natural desire is to try to make it up to the other person, often at cost to yourself, either by the expensive nature of the gift, or the serious effort that is required. This happens all the time, whether the 'making up gift' is a box of chocolates and a bunch of flowers, or something more substantial. But the fact is that we can never 'make it up to God', our best efforts are always tainted. Jesus' death, however, is the ultimate 'sacrifice' - he offered himself to God for us. He paid the supreme cost, which 'makes up' for the breach of the relationship, reconciling humanity and God.

**b) Helpless victims rescued:** At the same time, the cross also deals with the victim side of the equation. Recall from last week that the Bible pictures Sin/Evil as a cosmic power, the great enemy of God, personified in the Evil One, the Devil. And in the face of this terrible spiritual power, we humans are helpless victims, held in a slavery from which we cannot escape by ourselves. Hence our need for a Saviour, someone to rescue us.

## **Read John 12.31-33 and Colossians 2.13-15**

In each passage, how is the death/resurrection of Jesus understood?

John 12.31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." 33 He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Colossians 2.13 And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, 14 erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

How does this action of Jesus solve the problem of sin and evil?

Here Jesus' death is described in terms of freeing us to be the people we were created to be, women and men who live their lives in freedom and joy, trusting and living for the Creator God who made us. And the way that this is done is by defeating a terrible power which holds us captive. On the cross, Jesus looks like he hangs in abject failure and defeat; but the reality is far different. In fact, the cross constitutes a great victory. On the cross, Jesus drives out the ruler of the world, the one to whom we are enslaved. Elsewhere in the New Testament, this truth is put in terms of evil being condemned in his body, and as Jesus rescuing us from the dominion of darkness.

How are we to understand this victory over Evil? One helpful way to come to grips with this idea is as a 'moral victory'. A moral victory is the kind of victory which sometimes looks like defeat, but where the real test is a test of character, and in particular whether a person will choose the easy way to apparent success, or the harder way, which is in fact real victory. It's like that with Jesus. At the cross, Jesus encountered the full brunt of the forces of evil. We see it in the way the events unfolded - falsely accused, unjustly tried before a hopelessly biased court, barbarically tortured and brutally executed. And that was just at the physical level. In fact, the spiritual trial, as Jesus took into himself the pain of abandonment by his friends, rejection by his enemies, even forsaken by God (remember his piercing cry on the cross - "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me") was far deeper than the physical agony, horrendous though that was.

And the victory is precisely that Jesus chose not to repay evil for evil, or abuse for abuse; on the contrary, he repaid with a blessing (again, remember Jesus prayer - "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."). In other words, he did not enter into the pattern of the evil being

perpetrated against him, fighting fire with fire, threatening when he suffered, lashing out and so sending the cycle of violence one further spiral down towards hell. That is what we see in so many of the long term armed conflicts in the world – Palestine, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, as each attempt to settle the score simply adds to the body count and the hatred. Instead, Jesus chose another path, the path of victory over Evil; he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. In this way, he was not overcome by evil, but overcame evil with good.

## Rising to new life!

Of course, the cross is incomplete without the resurrection...

### **Read 1 Corinthians 15.17-22**

1 Corinthians 15.17 If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. 19 If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. 20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. 21 For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; 22 for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

**How does Paul describe the place of the resurrection in the salvation that Jesus wins?**

Jesus' resurrection is much more than simply the mopping up after the job has been done, it is an essential part of his achievement. The Apostle Paul puts it bluntly: "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15.17). In other words, the resurrection is not just fact, it is act.

The New Testament writers are entirely bold about what the resurrection achieves. It constitutes the enthronement of Jesus, his elevation to a position of leadership and authority that is parallel to God's own position. The word that is used to capture the significance of this position is 'Lord'. It carries a double meaning. Firstly, it is a word that drips with unlimited, rightful, loving authority. Jesus himself said after his resurrection that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28.18). In the first Christian sermon ever preached, right in front of the temple in Jerusalem which was the scene of so much trouble for Jesus, the Apostle Peter says that "this Jesus God raised up ... Therefore let the entire house of Israel know that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified". And the Apostle Paul trumpets the fact that by raising him from the dead, God has highly exalted Jesus "and gave him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and earth and under

the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2.9-11). And secondly, 'Lord' in fact carries with it even more than the idea of power. It is nothing less than the name of God himself. Importantly, in the last Bible reference, Paul is himself quoting from the Old Testament, from the book of Isaiah, where God says: "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.' Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength." In other words, by quoting these verses, the Apostle Paul is saying that what God announced in Isaiah has been fulfilled in Jesus – Jesus is the one who bears the name 'Lord', and to whom universal recognition is due – and, most importantly, this has happened by resurrection.

What the resurrection means is that Jesus is alive now, and not just alive, Lord. The power of life in him was indestructible, not even death could hold him down. And so on that third day, he crashed through death, not to return to a life still lived in the shadow of the grave, but life lived the other side of death, life without limit, life the way God had meant it to be lived. And that life has not ceased for Jesus. One of the things that Christians have said to each other in church services for centuries is: "Christ is risen. He is risen indeed", and the present tense of that phrase says it all! He still is risen; he is currently Lord, the one who has universal authority and who deserves universal loyalty.

Another way to put this is to see Jesus as the beginning of God's future. God's fixed and faithful purpose to make an end of all that destroys and defaces life has been implemented in one place already – in the person of Jesus himself. He is the 'first-fruits', the Apostle Paul says, that early fruit of the harvest which is both precious itself and which guarantees that the rest of the harvest is on its way. In the resurrection of Jesus, God's future has arrived, and even if we ourselves are still part of the rest of the harvest, yet to come to fruition, we need have no doubts, for it has already begun. Jesus has been raised the first member of a renewed humanity, and Lord of a renewed world.

So many of the movies we watch are in the 'courageous hero saves innocent people and defeats the bad guys' mould. One of the classic figures of this sort of movie has often been played by Clint Eastwood in Westerns. He rides into town, a stranger without a past, works heroically and even sacrificially to save the town from the guns of the oppressors, and then rides out, leaving gasping but thankful townsfolk in his wake. Jesus too is a Saviour, but a very different sort of Saviour, in at least 2 ways. On the one hand, he doesn't come to us as a stranger, but rather comes to his own Creation, as the one through whom the Father has created everyone and everything. And second, he doesn't just float in and float out; he enters the very heart and soul of our situation, and effects it directly and personally. Rather than simply riding off into the distance for us to get on with our lives as best we can, Jesus re-orders things around his ongoing and loving presence and Lordship.

## Complete yet incomplete

Jesus spoke in such wonderfully extravagant terms: “Take courage – I have overcome the world”. Yes, that is true of course, and yet, in so many ways the world seems quite capable of carrying on without noticing. Not that nothing is different – as we’ve seen, in Jesus himself, and particularly his resurrected body, there is one part of the world that has been entirely renewed and restored, now utterly free even from the possibility of sin and death – “death no longer has dominion over him” (Romans 6.9). Over us, however, death still wins terrible victories, and inflicts deep scars. And so, from one perspective, being a Christian is characterised by waiting – waiting for the completion of what is already in principle (that is, in Jesus) completed – the fulfilment of God’s great purposes, the redemption of the world.

## So what?

The relevance of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus to us is simply this: will we see Jesus as the solution to our problem, one who saves us from the greatest of all enemies, from death itself, the consequence of our sin.

We are offered solutions all the time. Solutions to our financial troubles, solutions to our weight problems, solutions to the destruction of the environment. After a while, we can find ourselves thinking that none of the solutions we are offered really work, they are all just offers too good to be refused, which is exactly why they should be refused!

Last session we saw that our deepest problem, far deeper than wallets, waistlines and whales, is sin, and its inevitable, terrible consequence, death. It’s a problem that is so terrifying, we spend a good portion of time doing our very best not to think about it, and instead focussing on the problems we see as more manageable. But what if there were a solution that was as big and powerful and deep as the problem itself? What if there was a Saviour who dealt with sin and death? Dealt with sin by bearing it, bearing it away from us, bearing it to hell? What if there was a Saviour who dealt with death, by entering into death, and then breathtakingly, breaking through it?

This then is the challenge of Jesus. He claims to be, and speaks and acts as if he is, a Saviour who does precisely these things. Of course, it might turn out to be yet another easy fix that doesn’t really fix anything – that’s why the evidence matters so much. And so, you’ll find in the Appendix section a careful laying out of the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. No resurrection, no Saviour, just another failed messiah, just another guru encouraging you to lift yourself up by your own bootstraps.

But if Jesus did rise – as the evidence overwhelmingly indicates – then everything changes. He really is the saviour. The only question left is – will you recognise him as your Saviour?

We can summarise the key ideas from the Bible on 'Jesus' like this:

*Out of his great love, God sent his Son Jesus to defeat Evil and renew the world...*

**a. Lived**

- thanking, obeying and trusting his Father

**b. Died**

- as a sacrifice for our involvement with Evil
- rescuing us from our enslavement to Evil

**c. Raised**

- as the first of a renewed humanity
- as Lord of a renewed world