



Last week marked a turning point in the church year where we turned away from the stable and the festivities of Christmas and turned towards the cross. Before we begin our journey towards Lent and onto Easter today's readings help us to understand who Jesus is.

The reading from John's Gospel, for many, is closely associated with Christmas. We tend to remember it for its beautiful poetry. It tells us that from the beginning The Word (Jesus) was God, all things came into being through him and he became flesh and lived among us.

In Paul's letter to the Colossians he answers three questions about the person of Jesus:

Who is Jesus in relation to God?

'He is the image of the invisible God' Jesus Christ has all of God's characteristics of omniscience (all knowing), omnipotence (all powerful), immutability (never changing), and omnipresence (everywhere at once). It is through Jesus that God is fully revealed to us.

Who is Jesus in relation to creation?

'the firstborn of creation' this phrase expresses Christ's sovereignty over creation as it refers to his status. It is about Jesus being the only Son of the Father and being part of the Trinity **not** that he is a created being.

'for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible,' This picks up the same theme as in John 1:1-4, that Jesus is eternal and through him all things were made

Who is Jesus in relation to the church?

'He is the head of the body, the church' indicating that Jesus Christ is the source of our faith, and our lives should reflect his commands.

'through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things' It is through Jesus that we are restored as Children of God and are offered new and eternal life.

These readings remind us that as Christians we do not follow an ordinary man, who was a good moral teacher, but Jesus Christ the Son of God. As articulated by C S Lewis, an academic but probably better known to many as the author of the Narnia books, argues in his book *Mere Christianity*:

'I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. 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 the 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 patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God'

Our understanding of who Jesus is should impact every area of our life. Think about a time or situation when your understanding of who Jesus is, either changed how you live your life or choices you made.